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MEMOIRS

AND

POETICAL REMAINS

OF THE LATE

JANE TAYLOR:

WITH

EXTRACTS FROM HER CORRESPONDENCE.

BY ISAAC TAYLOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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CONTENTS.

VOL. I.

PAGE.

To E * * * * * * * * * xi

MEMOIRS.

SECTION I.

Infancy and Childhood at Lavenham..... 3

SECTION II.

Education, and early Friendships at Colchester... 24

SECTION III.

Religious Feelings, Family Customs, Employments and Recreations..... 37

SECTION IV.

PAGE.
New Friendships, and Literary Engagements 58

SECTION V.

Visit to Lavenham 69

SECTION VI.

Publication of Original Poems, &c. 79

SECTION VII.

Religious Feelings..... 89

SECTION VIII.

Domestic Feelings, Publication of the Associate Minstrels—Hymns for Infant Minds,—Hymns for Sunday Schools, &c. 104

SECTION IX.

Removal to Ongar, first and second Visit to Ilfracombe 117

SECTION X.

Residence at Marazion—Publication of Display, and Essays in Rhyme—Contributions to the Youth's Magazine 138

SECTION XI.

PAGE.
Visits—Residence at Ongar—Religious Feelings 159

SECTION XII.

Last Illness, and Death 179

VOL. II.

POETICAL REMAINS.

Philip; a Fragment 3
To Mad. De Staël 22
To the Moon 26
To Mrs. L. 29
Love and Fame: a Fable 32
Remonstrance to Time 36
Sunset 41
The Fairies' Song 42

PAGE.

To Miss G. on the Death of her Robin 44
An Enigma 47
The Vase and the Pitcher: a Fable 50
An Enigma 54
A Story 56
The Shipwrecked Lascar: a true Tale, addresed to Miss M. 60
The Beggar Boy 64
Lines written in an Album 67
To a Poetical Friend 71
To a Friend 73
To the same, on her Birth Day 75
To the same, on her Birth Day 78
To two Chesnut Trees 80
To a Sister, on her Birth Day 84
The Violet to the Rose 88
Birth Day retrospect 92
To a Brother, on his Birth Day 97
To Miss E. F. on her Birth Day 99
To Mr. C——, senior: with a Drawing 103
To the same 106
An Infant's Hymn 108
Hymn, sung by the children of a Sunday School 110
Hymn for Children 112

PAGE.
Hymn, for the children of a Sunday School 114
Sailor's Hymn 117
" With God all things are possible" 119
Hymn, " Come my fond fluttering heart" 121
Epitaph..... 124
On the Death of an Infant 125
On visiting an old family Residence 126
Trite thoughts in a place of Worship..... 127
Soliloquy 131
" The things that are unseen are eternal" 134

EXTRACTS FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE.

To Miss S. L. C. 141
To the same 146
To the same 148
To the same 151
To Miss E. F. 155
To Miss S. L. C. 159
To Miss E. F. 163
To Miss M. H..... 168

PAGE.

To Miss E. F. 171
To Mr. J. C..... 173
To Miss S. L. C. 175
To Mr. J. C..... 179
To Miss S. L. C. 185
To the same 189
To the same 191
To the same 196
To Mr. J. C..... 198
To the same 203
To the same 204
To Miss E. F. 208
To Miss M. H..... 210
To Mr. J. C..... 213
To Miss S. L. C. 215
To Mrs. W. (Miss S. L. C.)..... 217
To Mrs. G. (Miss E. F.) 219
To Mr. J. C. 223
To the same 227
To Mrs. G. 231
To Mrs. W. 233
To Miss E. M..... 237
To Mr. J. C..... 242
To Miss E. M..... 246

PAGE.

To Mrs. W. 251

To Miss M. H———e..... 253

To Miss E. M. 255

To the same 257

To Miss A. M. 263

To Miss M. H———e..... 267

To Miss E. M..... 270

To Miss A. M. 273

To Miss M. H———e 275

To Miss S. G. 280

To Mrs. G. 286

To Miss E. M. 288

To Miss M. H———e..... 292

To Mrs W. (Miss E. M.)..... 296

To Miss S. M. and her Sisters and Brothers..... 298

To Miss S. M. 315

To Miss E. M * * * * * * 318

To Miss M. H———e..... 320

To Miss S. M. and her Sisters 322

TO E * * * * * * * * *.

THE following Memoir of my late sister I have aimed to compose as if it had been intended especially for your perusal:—to you, then, it is dedicated. In keeping this idea before me I have hoped to execute my task in a manner the most acceptable to the class of readers whom I would chiefly wish to please;—I mean persons like yourself, to whom, through her writings, the name of Jane Taylor has been associated with some of their earliest intellectual pleasures,

and perhaps, with their first impressions of virtue and piety.

Long before you personally knew your late friend, you were taught to think of her as your guide and instructress; and when at length you were introduced to her, every preconceived feeling of respect and love was enhanced. The period of your intercourse with her was indeed almost entirely filled with a succession of painful events; yet they all tended to fix in your heart an affectionate remembrance which time will not efface.

I may therefore feel assured that, even independently of the new interest you possess in the name and character of my sister, you will be pleased to learn all that I can retrace of her history—of her habits of life—her occupations—

her friendships, and her conduct amidst the ordinary occasions of common life.

But while I am endeavouring to give as much explicitness to my narrative as shall satisfy your wishes, and as much, especially, as may render the subjoined Extracts from the Correspondence fully intelligible, you will perceive that I shall be embarrassed with a considerable difficulty in having to separate the personal history of my sister from that of her family. To do so as completely as I should wish, is plainly impracticable; especially as her character and habits were such as united her most closely in every thing with those she loved. I must, therefore, in many instances, dismiss the fear of being charged with egotism; and rather than omit particulars which to you, and to readers like-minded with yourself, may seem interesting and instructive,

shall use ingenuousness, and claim the candour that the peculiarity of the case demands.

Yet so far as it may be done consistently with my avowed design, I shall detach what relates to the subject of this Memoir from the interests of those with whom, in fact, she was always most intimately joined. Let it then suffice once to say that, wherever it may well be done, an exemption is claimed for the living from the demands of that curiosity which it is usual to gratify relative to the dead who have occupied a place in public esteem.

Nor, I must add, is it solely on behalf of survivors that an exemption from the demands of public curiosity may be claimed; for even in what relates to the deceased, a biographer must be considered as free to give or to withhold the facts

of personal history.—There may have been events of the deepest interest to the party, in reference to which he may be silent; even though the full narration of such facts might serve, beyond any others, to display the strength or christian fortitude of the character he has to exhibit. The common cares and griefs of life may be described for the edification of others; but there are sorrows that are sacred; and sorrows still fresh in the memory of survivors are especially so: for though the subject of them be passed where "there is no more pain, neither sorrow nor weeping," yet, as for our own feelings' sake, we hide the mortal remains of the dead, so should we shroud their recent griefs.

By the indulgence of her friends, I have had the perusal of nearly* the entire mass of letters

* I ought to mention a large exception made by the sup-

written by my sister during the course of five and twenty years: from this mass it would have been easy to furnish volumes, without admitting any less interesting than those which have been selected. But many reasons forbade so copious and indiscriminate a publication. — You have seen enough of your late friend's letters to know that the lively interest she felt in every thing that concerned her friends, filled a great part of almost all of them with allusions to

pression of the *whole* of her letters to one much loved friend. This suppression occasions, besides the loss, as I doubt not, of many interesting passages, a very important deficiency in the materials of the Memoir; as my sister's intimacy with this one friend constituted, of itself, a great part of the history of her mind, during many years. That so little trace of this friendship appears in the Memoir, or among the Extracts from the Correspondence, is not attributable to the option of her biographer. Memorials of the strength and tenderness of this friendship are, however, to be found among the Poetical Remains. Vol. II. p. 73, 75, 78.

their concerns; and, of course, the publication of such passages would have been a violation of the confidence reposed in me by her correspondents. Hence it is, that there is scarcely an entire letter in the collection; but the excinded parts will not often seem wanting to the reader.

The constitutional pensiveness of my sister's mind was, as you know, relieved by a peculiar playfulness of fancy; so that she turned in an instant, from the pathetic to the humorous, without any violence to her own feelings, and —to those who knew her intimately—without any unpleasing abruptness of manner: yet, to many readers, some of these sudden transitions might give offence, or seem to require explanation. But whether grave or gay, all, with her, was genuine:—her letters give the true image of her mind; and will hold up a living

portrait of her character. You know how strong was her dislike of the least semblance of affectation; and of all the kinds of affectation, there was none she more abhorred than that which too frequently appears in the conversation and letters of persons who think they have some literary reputation to support. Rather than seem chargeable with this fault, she would restrain every excursion of her fancy, and repress all the playfulness of her wit.—Those who knew her manner, when quite at ease, will trace the influence of this strong feeling in many of her letters. "Some people," she says, "think it a great recommendation to be able to write *a clever letter;* but if there is any thing I dislike to receive, or that I am unambitious of writing, it is *a clever letter;* by which I mean a letter that exhibits, obviously, an endeavour to be smart and pointed; or, worse still, fine and sentimental."

And besides this dread of literary affectation, my sister had so decided a taste for all that is practical, useful, and important in common life, that her pursuit of the embellishments and the luxuries of intellect was greatly restrained. She would rather forego the gratifications of taste, than seem, in any thing, to trifle. Especially in the latter years of her life, a peculiarly deep impression of the great objects of christian faith, and of the obligations of christian duty, inclined her to estimate, as of very trivial importance, many of the pursuits which engross the attention of cultivated minds. To the interests and affections of common life, she never became indifferent; but what belonged not to the *heart*, or to present duty, was lost to her in the light of the life to come. This spirit is apparent in many of her letters of late date; and indeed ruled her habitual feelings. The expression used

by her in the letter written the day before her death, to yourself, and your sisters, far from being extorted by the instant terrors of dissolution, conveyed, truly, the settled conviction of her mind—that, "the whole business of life is preparation for death."—My desire in fulfilling the charge committed to me will be, faithfully to exhibit her example, so as shall tend to enforce this, her last testimony.

I. T.

Stanford Rivers, September 23, 1828.

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

JANE TAYLOR.

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

JANE TAYLOR.

SECTION I.

Infancy and Childhood at Lavenham.

JANE, their second daughter, was born September 23, 1783, while her parents resided in London. From her birth, and during the first two years of infancy, her constitution seemed so delicate, and her health so precarious, that it was hardly expected she would survive this critical period of life. But happily, before she had completed her third year, Mr. Taylor removed with his family into the country, and from that time she appeared to take a new possession of life; and soon acquired the bloom and vivacity of perfect health.

His engagements as an artist being such as allowed him to reside at a distance from London, Mr. Taylor gladly availed himself of this liberty to establish his fast increasing family where the same means would procure a much larger amount of comfort than in London; and where health, and all the best enjoyments of life are much more likely to be secured. It was in the summer of the year 1786 that my father and mother, with their two little girls, removed to Lavenham in Suffolk. Ann, the eldest, was then in the sixth, and Jane in the fourth year of her age; and were therefore able to enjoy with their parents the simple pleasures and extended comforts of their new habitation. Accustomed as she had been to the narrow bounds, and to the many restraints of a London house, Jane's spirits broke forth with unusual emotions of pleasure amid the ample space, and the agreeable objects that now surrounded her.

Very soon after her removal to the country, Jane displayed, not merely a healthy vivacity and child-like eagerness in the amusements provided

for her by her fond parents, but an uncommon fertility of invention in creating pleasures for herself:—It was evident to those who observed her, that, even from her third or fourth year, the little girl inhabited a fairy land, and was perpetually occupied with the imaginary interests of her teeming fancy. "I can remember," says her sister, "that Jane was always the saucy, lively, entertaining little thing—the amusement and the favourite of all that knew her. At the baker's shop she used to be placed on the kneading-board, in order to recite, preach, narrate, &c. to the great entertainment of his many visitors. And at Mr. Blackadder's she was the life and fun of the farmer's hearth. Her plays, from the earliest that I can recollect, were deeply imaginative; and I think that in 'Moll and Bet'—'The Miss Parks'—'The Miss Sisters'—'The Miss Bandboxes,' and 'Aunt and Niece,' which I believe is the entire catalogue of them, she lived in a world wholly of her own creation, with as deep a feeling of reality as life itself could afford. These lasted from the age of three or

four, till ten or twelve. About the latter time her favourite employment, in play time, was whipping a top; during the successful spinning of which she composed tales and dramas, some of which she afterwards committed to paper. She would spend hours in this kind of reverie, in the large unfurnished parlour, at our own house at Lavenham. But I think I may say that the retiring character of her mind—a morbid sensibility towards things and persons *without*, as well as much refined feeling, operated to prevent a *due* estimate being formed of her talent, till much later in life. I need not tell *you*, that they were never made a *shew* of to any body. But timid as she was in and about herself, she had the courage of enterprize in the service of those she loved;—she was, you know, the presenter of every petition for holidays and special favours, and the spirited *foremost* in every youthful plan."

This early and unusual activity of the imagination Jane afterwards lamented. "I do believe," she says, "that this habit of *castle-building* is very injurious to the mind. I know

I have sometimes lived so much in a *castle*, as almost to forget that I lived in a *house*." Yet perhaps it was better that this faculty was awakened in childhood, than that it should have slumbered till youth. Had she continued in London it is probable that, with the dim impressions of a sickly frame, and the sombre dulness of surrounding objects, the imagination would have continued in its germ till it had been quickened by the feverish excitements of riper years. But surely there is a better hope for the character when this faculty expands during the innocence of infancy, and amid the fair scenes of nature; for these first pure impressions tend to pre-occupy the fancy, and to give a lasting direction to the tastes.

The house occupied by Mr. Taylor at Lavenham was situated in a street of detached dwellings, of a humbler class than itself, at the outskirts of the town. These cottages were inhabited chiefly by the poor employed in the woollen manufacture, which at that time still lingered in this neighbourhood, where it had formerly

greatly flourished. The scene which this street exhibited on a summer's day, thirty years ago, is now hardly any where to be observed. The spinning wheel was planted on the foot-way before every door, and the females of each family wrought in groups of young and old together. Perhaps it ought not to be much regretted that industry has ceased to be *picturesque;* but surely the common enjoyments of life seemed less incompatible with the severities of labour *then* than they do now, among those who spend their long days in close ranks, around the steam engine.

My father's house was sufficiently spacious to afford apartments in which the children might be left to their amusements without restraint. A pleasant, and rather large garden adjoined the house: it was open towards the country, and a long and wide grass walk, reaching its whole length, was terminated at the upper end by an arbour, in the old-fashioned style, and at the other by a haw-haw; beyond which were pastures, a rugged common, and more distant corn

fields. In this garden the sisters were very early companions in song, for they were wont, before the eldest was six years old, to pace up and down the green walks, hand in hand, lisping a simple couplet of their joint composition.

From the time of their removal to Lavenham, Jane and her sister were indulged with a small room, not used as a nursery, but given up to them as their exclusive domain, and furnished with all their little apparatus of amusement. And either abroad, or in this apartment, they learned to depend upon their own invention for their diversions; for it was always a part of their parents' plan of education to afford to their children both *space* and *materials* for furnishing amusement to themselves. And so much were they all accustomed to exercise invention, for filling up agreeably the hours of liberty, that I doubt if ever their father or mother was applied to with the listless inquiry—"What shall I play at?"

Jane became, at this time, so much known among neighbours and friends, as "a most di-

verting little thing," that her company was courted, and herself flattered in a degree that would have injured the disposition of most children; and it is not affirmed that she was wholly unhurt by it; but with all her spirit and vivacity, such was her timidity, that no feeling of vanity or obtrusiveness seemed to be produced by these attentions.—She received the plaudits of her audience at the baker's shop, or in the farmer's Christmas party, much in the same way that she afterwards heard the expression of public favour:—both might give a momentary stimulus to the exertion of her talent; but neither the one nor the other impaired or disturbed her native and habitual diffidence. This early celebrity did not fail to excite the watchful fears of her parents; and so far as it was possible to prevent it, Jane was restrained from thus furnishing amusement to the neighbourhood, at so great a hazard to her simplicity. But a fast increasing family unavoidably left her at times under the care of servants, who were gratified at having so much talent to exhibit.

At what age, precisely, Jane began to write verses and tales, I have not been able to ascertain. But some pieces have been preserved which, there is reason to believe, were written in her eighth year. Even a year or two earlier, it is remembered, that she had furnished her memory with histories, which she used to recite with such variations as the inspiration of the moment might suggest. And though, of course, no idea of the kind had ever been given her by her parents, (and no other persons had access to her who would have thought of such a thing) yet it seems that, as soon as she began to write at all, she cherished the ambition of writing a *book*. Most of her childish scribblings have the form of something prepared for the public: I have before me, of this early date, prefaces, title pages, introductions and dedications: among these the following is so characteristic that I shall venture to produce it. It appears to have been written in her tenth year.—

PREFACE.

To be a poetess I don't aspire;
From such a title humbly I retire;
But now and then a line I try to write;
Though bad they are—not worthy human sight.

Sometimes into my hand I take a pen,
Without the hope of aught but mere chagrin:
I scribble—then leave off, in sad despair,
And make a blot, in spite of all my care.

I laugh and talk, and preach a sermon well;
Go about begging, and your fortune tell:
As to my poetry, indeed 'tis all
As good and worse by far than none at all.

Have patience yet I pray, peruse my book;
Although you smile when on it you do look:
I know that in 't there's many a shocking failure;
But that forgive—the author is Jane Taylor.

It was perhaps a year later that she addressed to her father the following

PETITION.

Ah dear papa! did you but know
The trouble of your Jane,
I'm sure you would relieve me now,
And ease me of my pain.

Although your garden is but small,
And more indeed you crave,
There's one small bit, not used at all,
And this I wish to have.

A pretty garden I would make,
That you would like, I know;
Then pray papa, for pity's sake,
This bit of ground bestow.

For whether now I plant or sow,
The chickens eat it all;
I'd fain my sorrows let you know,
But for the tears that fall.

My garden then should be your lot:
I've often heard you say,
There useful trees you wish to put,
But mine were in the way.

But for the most part, Jane confided her productions to no one except her sister; and the extent to which she indulged the propensity to write, at this early age, was unknown to her parents. Indeed, the habit of scribbling was purely spontaneous, nor was it cherished by any encouragement from her father or mother. The whole intention of their plan of education was to fit their children for the discharge of the ordinary duties of life; and to elicit or to display *talent* was far from being their ambition. A home education was early determined upon, and systematically pursued, through a course of years. Jane and her sister spent a part of every day with their father, receiving from him the rudiments of that education of the nature of which I shall have occasion hereafter to speak; and a considerable part with their mother, who, from

the first, made her daughters her *companions*, treating them, and conversing with them as reasonable beings. They were accustomed to attend and to assist her in every domestic engagement, learning at once the reason and the practice of all that was done. In the afternoon and evening, while employed by their mother's side, subjects of all kinds, within the range of their comprehension, were discussed. These conversations were at intervals relieved by singing hymns —a practice which tends, insensibly, to blend all the best and happiest emotions of the infant heart with the language of piety.

It was especially the practice of their mother in her treatment of her children, to avoid every thing like *manœuvering* or mystery, as well as all unnecessary concealment of the reasons of her conduct towards them. She confided in them as *friends;* and at the earliest time at which such ideas could enter their minds, they were acquainted with their father's affairs; so far at least as was necessary to qualify them to sympathise in every care, and to induce them to adapt

their own feelings and expectations to their parents' means. This plan, moreover, preserved them, as far as children can be preserved, from the temptation to practise those petty artifices which debase the mind, and benumb the conscience.

As it formed a material part of Jane's intellectual education, I may here mention a custom adopted by her mother a year or two before the time of which I am now speaking—that of reading aloud at every meal. Her hearing being so far defective as to destroy her comfort in taking part in conversation, she had recourse to a book in order to prevent the social hours from becoming hours of silence. By constant use she acquired the habit of taking her food with little interruption to the reading; and only on occasions of extreme ill health was it ever wholly suspended. This practice, while it has been a solace and delight to herself, and has, in some degree enabled her to forget her misfortune in being shut out from free intercourse with her family;—to them has been directly and indi-

rectly, highly beneficial, especially in preventing unprofitable conversation, in cherishing a literary taste, and in imparting, without labour or cost of time, a great mass of information :— and the choice of books was always made with a view to the pleasure and advantage of the younger members of the family.

No part of Jane's character was more prominent and distinguishing than her susceptibility to feelings of tender, generous, and constant friendship: this disposition displayed itself as early as her propensity to write; and seemed, indeed, to awaken her talent.

Her affection for her sister was of the liveliest kind; but besides this intimacy, she early found a companion who became the object of a more than childlike regard. Ann and Jane W. were, respectively, about the same age as Ann and Jane Taylor: their parents were distinguished in their circle by good sense, superior education, and excellence of character. Their large family, of which Ann and Jane were the youngest members, was remarkably well ordered and intelligent.

The four girls, with the full acquiescence of their parents, became very constant companions; and continued to be so till the removal of this family from Lavenham.

My sister always thought herself peculiarly happy in her friendships; and this early intimacy, though soon to be dissolved, prepared her for the enjoyment of some that were more lasting and important in after life.

It was with a much more lively sorrow than most children of ten years old would have felt on such an occasion, that Jane parted for ever with her friend Jane W. Mr. W. though a man of grave manners, settled habits, and remarkable sobriety of judgment, and though bound to his country, if not by other feelings, at least by extensive connections, and large mercantile concerns, broke away from all to establish himself with his family in New England. And in this instance the voluntary banishment proved more fortunate than many that took place at the same time. An occasional correspondence was continued between my sisters and their young

friends for upwards of twenty years. I will here introduce a monument of Jane's warm attachment to her first friend, written in her eleventh year:—it breathes the spirit that has always distinguished her.

TO MISS JANE W.

ON HER LEAVING ENGLAND.

Alas! it must be,
My ever dear Jane,
You must part with me:
We must not meet again.

Accept then, my dear,
These verses from me;
Although I do fear
Far too mean they be.

I love you, believe,
My Jane and my friend;
How much should I grieve
If our friendship should end.

But this cannot be,
Believe me sincere,
Though th' Atlantic sea
Should part us, my dear.

Remember your Jane,
When alone in the grove:
Forget not her name;—
She will ever you love.

You soon sure will find
A friend that is new:
Don't push Jane behind,
But remember her too.

Adieu then, my friend;
The thought gives me pain;
My love shall not end;
So remember your Jane.

In the winter of the year 1792 the comfort of the family and the education of the children were, for a long time, interrupted by the dangerous illness of their father. Throughout this season of affliction their mother's thoughts and cares were almost entirely confined to the chamber of sickness. For, during many weeks, her husband's recovery seemed to herself, and to his medical attendants very improbable; and long after the immediate danger had passed away, he required not less the incessant attention of his anxious partner, who never willingly left him for an instant to the care of hirelings. In these months of sorrow and fear the children, now five in number, were therefore unavoidably abandoned to the neglects and the improper treatment of servants. And not only was the course of their education interrupted, but their mother was tortured by knowing that their minds and manners were exposed to those evil influences from which, hitherto, her vigilance had, in so great a degree, preserved them. Nevertheless she had then, as she has ever had, this comforting reflection, that it was

not by their mother's fondness for dissipating pleasures that her children were ever exposed for a day—nor an hour, to the society of servants.

Soon after Mr. Taylor's recovery from this illness, being obliged to leave the house he had hitherto rented, he purchased, and nearly rebuilt one adjoining to it. In this new abode family order and comfort were soon restored. The house was commodious, and the garden promised to become all that could be wished; and being in part newly retrieved from the waste, afforded the pleasures of formation and improvement. The storm of affliction having passed away, a fair sky seemed to smile upon the distant future. But this agreeable prospect was soon wholly changed; and a sphere of new duties was opened, as it seemed by the plain indications of Divine Providence, to my father's christian zeal. The particular circumstances which led to this change belong not to my subject:—they were however such as made him think it his duty to abandon the comforts with which he had just surrounded

himself, and to comply with the wishes of a dissenting congregation at Colchester, to become their minister. Early in the year 1796 he removed to that town, with his family, and assumed the pastoral care of the society assembling in the meeting-house in Bucklessbury-lane.

SECTION II.

Education, and early Friendships, at Colchester.

JANE was in her thirteenth year at the time of the removal of the family to Colchester.

Changes in scene and circumstance are, to minds so much alive, as was Jane's, to the full force of every impression, the occasions of important and permanent changes in the character; and therefore become worthy of passing notice in its history. Colchester being then the station of a large body of troops, the utmost activity prevailed throughout the town; and its broad and handsome High Street was a perpetual scene of gay and busy movement. Its many interesting antiquities, also, and the agreeable country by which it is surrounded were sources of new

pleasures. The house occupied by Mr. Taylor during his stay at Colchester, though situated near the centre of the town, had attached to it a garden, which, under his care, very soon became agreeable; and was so much so to Jane, that it is frequently alluded to in her letters, as the scene of her happiest hours.

The course of his children's instruction was soon resumed by my father after his settlement at Colchester. Our parents were agreed in their decided preference of a *home* education, at least for their daughters, who, with the exception of a few lessons in the lighter accomplishments, received from their father their entire education; his engagements being such as allowed him to superintend their learning without inconvenience. They have ever thought themselves indebted to him for solid advantages, which greatly overbalanced the value of any accomplishments they might better have gained at school. It may be permitted to me here to say that his methods of teaching were peculiarly happy, in being at once lucid, comprehensive, and facile to the learner. He aimed less

to impart those shreds of information, which serve for little except to deck out ignorance with the show of knowledge, than to expand the mind by a general acquaintance with all the more important objects of science: so that, in whatever direction, in after life, his children might pursue their studies, they might find the difficulties attending the first steps on unknown ground already overcome. It was also in his view, a principal object to prevent the formation of a narrow and exclusive taste for particular pursuits, by exciting, very early, a lively interest on subjects of every kind. The influence of this comprehensive system on Jane's tastes was very apparent in after life.* For though, by the conformation of her mind, she most frequented the regions of imagination, and of moral sentiment; she always retained so genuine a taste for pursuits of an opposite kind, as at once to impart the spirit of liberality to her mind, and to become

* Her opinions on this subject she has given in several of the papers contributed to the Youth's Magazine; especially in that "On a Liberal Taste."

the source of richness and variety in her writings. The result upon herself of the kind of education she received, she has well expressed when, in describing a true taste, she says, that—" while it will stoop to inspect and admire the most minute and laborious operations of industry, and while it feels an interest and sympathy in every branch of knowledge, it returns with a natural bias towards that which is most comprehensive in science, most intellectual in art, and most sublime in nature."

In the new circle of friends to which the family was introduced at Colchester, were some persons of superior education and intelligence; and among the many young persons with whom my sisters presently became acquainted, Jane soon found a friend, with whom, until death intervened, she maintained an affectionate intimacy. Peculiarly formed for friendship, she was peculiarly happy in her friends—except in having several, most dear to her, torn from her by early death:—such was the case in the present instance. Jane's new friend was the youngest of the

four lovely daughters of Dr. S——, a physician, esteemed for the excellence of his private character, as well as for his professional ability. He died about the time of which I am speaking; leaving a widow, four daughters, and a son, who alone survives. The intercourse of this family with ours, during several years, was so intimate and frequent, as to claim mention in this memoir, especially as they are frequently referred to in the correspondence.

Those who may still remember Mira S. will allow that they have rarely seen united so much intelligence and sweetness of disposition, and loveliness of manners and of person. Her charm was that of blended dignity and gentleness. Not long after the commencement of my sister's intimacy with this family, Mira exhibited symptoms of the malady of which, in the course of a few years, herself and her sisters, were the victims; and died at Exeter; after spending two or three years in frequent, but hopeless changes of scene, among her friends in Ireland and the west of England. Bythia the second daughter, though

less lovely in person, and less gentle in disposition than her elder sister, endeared herself to her friends by the affectionate warmth and candour of her disposition. The progress of her fatal illness was more rapid than in the case of her sister:—she died in Dublin in the preceding year; where also Eliza, her younger sister, died soon after. Letitia—Jane's friend, was little inferior, either in intelligence or in loveliness, to Mira. Many of the letters that passed between Jane and Letitia are before me, and although there is not a little of girlish romance in them, they afford proofs enough of great energy of character on the one part, and of much warmth and tenderness of feeling, and originality of thought on the other.

Letitia quickly followed her sister to the grave. She also had been sent, more than once, to the West of England; and died on her way thither, at Basingstoke, December 12, 1806. The death of Letitia S. under the peculiar circumstances which attended it, made a deep impression upon the mind of her friend; and is indeed so fraught

with instruction that it may well claim a page in this memoir. Should the following brief narrative meet the eye of the only surviving member of the family, I doubt not he would willingly consent to its being given to the reader.

The mild and gentle spirit of their mother did not supply to these young women the loss they had sustained in the death of their father. They soon learned to pay too little deference to her wishes and opinions; and finding herself unable, by gentle measures, to control the high spirits of her daughters, she left them, with a faint show of opposition, to follow their own tastes. Her inefficient influence seemed rather to accelerate than retard their abandonment of all the principles—or prejudices, as they were fondly called, of their education. And so eager were they in the work of "thinking for themselves," that a very short time sufficed to establish them in a resolute contempt of every principle they had received from their parents. This tendency of their minds to discard whatever they had been taught in matters of belief, was unhappily aggra-

vated by their witnessing a general laxity of manners, and some flagrant scandals among the religionists whose creed was already the object of their scorn. And such offences are sure to produce the utmost mischief in the minds of young persons whose education, while it has elevated their notions of the requirements of christianity, has failed to affect themselves with the spirit of piety.

In addition to these unfavourable circumstances on the one side, these young ladies were exposed, on the other, to the most seductive influence from the connections they had lately formed at a distance from home. Many of their new friends were persons at once intelligent, refined in their manners, amiable in their tempers, and perfectly versed in all the specious glozings of Socinianism. And Socinianism, only twenty years ago, was much more *specious* than it is at present. For within this period the course of controversy has deprived its professors of an advantage—so important to the success of

infidel insinuations—that of having itself no defined or avowed principles to defend.

In the society of persons of this class these intelligent young women quickly imbibed the spirit, and learned the language of universal disbelief; and whatever might have been their early devotional feelings, they became confessedly irreligious in their tastes, and habits. This change was but little obvious in the placid temper of Mira. She was, indeed, fascinated with the showy simplicity of this masked deism, and perplexed by its sophistries; but she thought and felt too much to be ever perfectly satisfied with the opinions she had adopted:—her mind had rather been entangled than captivated. During her illness she seemed anxious, in some degree, to retrace her steps; and in the last days of her life she earnestly recommended her sisters to addict themselves, with greater seriousness and humility, to the reading of the scriptures; and died imploring, with mournful indecision, to be "saved in God's own way."

Letitia was not at all less forward than her sisters, to renounce what she termed—"the errors of her education:"—she was even more determined and dogmatical than some of them in her new professions. This difference of opinion, along with other circumstances, had lessened the intimacy between Letitia and Jane: they maintained, however, to the last, a friendly correspondence; though the subject of religion was, by the desire of the former, banished from their letters.

After many changes of place, she once more left Colchester, accompanied by her mother, on her way to Devonshire; but was soon compelled to make her last home at an inn on the road; where she lingered more than three months. The disappointment of her strong wish to reach Exeter, awakened her to the knowledge of her immediate danger; and this apprehension was soon succeeded by all the terrors of an affrighted conscience. The conviction of being an offender against the Divine Law, and exposed, without shelter, to its sanctions, took such full possession

of her spirit that, for a length of time, she rejected all consolation: and endured an agony of fear, in expectation of dying without the hope of the Gospel. At length, however, her mind admitted freely and joyfully that "only hope set before us;" and she fully and explicitly renounced the illusions by which she had been betrayed; declaring them to be utterly insufficient to satisfy an awakened conscience, in the prospect of standing before the bar of the Supreme Judge. She lived long enough to display many of the effects of this happy change:—the whole temper of her mind seemed renovated; she became patient, thankful, affectionate, and humble; and triumphed in the profession of her hope:—"My hope," she said, "is in Christ—in Christ crucified:—and I would not give up *that hope*, for all the world."

The course of the memoir has been anticipated by this digression: I must now revert to the time of my sister's first acquaintance with these young ladies. The close intimacy and very frequent intercourse of the two families very greatly

promoted the mental improvement of all parties; for there were advantages of different kinds possessed by each, which very fairly balanced the mutual benefit. About this time, that is, when Jane was in her fifteenth year, the six friends, in conjunction with two or three others, formed themselves into a society for the reading of original essays, and the promotion of intellectual improvement. Jane's diffidence of her own powers, her peculiar dread of *competition*, as well as her being one of the youngest members of the society, prevented her from standing very forward in these exercises; but she filled up her part well; and some of the pieces read at the meetings of the society present plain indications of the originality of thought, soundness of sentiment, and sprightliness and simplicity of style, which have since distinguished her writings. But Jane was then, and indeed long after that time, afraid to believe that she had any talent; and it is known that a belief of the possession, is necessary to the full exercise of intellectual endowments. Nevertheless the part she took in this

society very evidently ripened her powers of thinking; and accustomed her to govern the excursions of her fancy. From this time what she wrote was oftener in the form of didactic essays, than in that of tales and romances.—To what extent she continued to write verses, does not appear:—a few pieces only of this date have been preserved. But as they neither possess the interest that belongs to the earliest specimens of talent; nor the intrinsic excellence of maturer productions, I shall not obtrude them on the reader.

SECTION III.

Religious Feelings—Family Customs—Employments and Recreations.

EVERY means of habitual instruction, and occasional admonition were employed by our parents to affect the hearts of their children with religious principles: and there is reason to believe that Jane, very early, received strong impressions of this kind. But being reserved and timid by disposition, and peculiarly distrustful of herself, little was known of the state of her mind. Her imagination, susceptible as it was in the highest degree to impressions of fear, rendered her liable, at times, to those deep and painful emotions which belong to a conscience that is enlightened, but not fully pacified. And these

feelings, when blended with the pensiveness of her tender heart, gave a character of mournfulness and distress to her religious feelings during several years. Religious principles, if thus clouded, must always be less influential than when the mind is in a happier state; for the heart cannot be favourably ruled by fear: yet they were not destitute of influence upon her conduct; and I find, dated in her fourteenth year, records of pious resolutions, and emphatic expressions of the sense she had of the supreme importance of the objects of christian faith. Some unfinished verses, written about this time, were evidently composed under the influence of feelings too strong to allow of the exercise of her poetic talent:—they are interesting as records of deep and genuine religious feeling; but are too rude for publication.

A religious education, meeting with feelings so highly excitable, and at the same time exposed to many fascinations, is likely to produce frequent and painful conflicts between opposing principles, before that peace is obtained which

makes religion the source of all that is happy and excellent in the character. Such was, for a length of time, the state of my sister's mind. But I believe that though often perplexed and distressed by seeming difficulties, her conviction of the truth of revealed religion was never materially shaken; and her *habitual* belief in its reality was full and firm: and in the latter years of her life, I think I may say, it was never disturbed. Every word on the subject of religion, contained, either in her letters to her friends, or in her published writings, was the genuine expression of an unfeigned faith.

In a letter to a friend which will be found among those subjoined to this memoir, Jane says, "Our earlier friendships, though they must ever be remembered with interest and fond affection, were little adapted to promote our truest welfare. Though to them, indeed, we are indebted for many benefits of a less valuable nature."

With our parents, the only choice at this time was, either to seclude their children from all

society; or to allow them such as was within their reach, though not altogether of the kind they would have wished. The first alternative was hardly practicable; and in admitting the latter many advantages of a secondary kind were enjoyed. But the effect, upon the minds of young persons, of frequenting the society of those in whose conversation and manners religious principle or feeling does not appear, will almost inevitably be to render what they know of religion the source of uneasiness, and of fruitless conflicts between conscience and inclination: and if, at the same time, much of hollow religionism is witnessed by them, the probable result will be either immoveable indifference, or confirmed infidelity. Happily neither of these effects were produced upon the mind of my sister; but instead of them, her religious comfort was prevented long afterwards, by the habit of feeling then formed.

That religion was the subject of her habitual regard, will appear by the following passages from letters of early date:—

"Oh it is hard fighting in our own strength against the evil bias of the heart, and external enemies. Their united forces are, I am daily more convinced, far too much for any thing but grace to overcome. No good resolutions, no efforts of reason, no desire to please, can alone succeed:—they may varnish the character; but O! how insufficient are such motives for the trying occasions of common life. I would shine most at home; yet I would not be good for the sake of shining; but for its own sake: and when thus I trace the subject to first principles, I find a change of heart can alone effect what I desire; that 'new heart and right spirit' which is the gift of God."

To the same friend, soon after, she writes—

"I am grieved, my dear E. to hear from you so melancholy an account of the state of your mind. I wish I were a more able counsellor; or rather, I wish you would overcome your feelings, and apply to those whose consolations and advice might be useful to you. I can sincerely sympathize with you in all your griefs. I rejoice

in having obtained your confidence; and I cannot make a better use of it than to urge you to seek some abler adviser. I speak from experience when I say, how much benefit you might derive from an open communication of your feelings to your dear mother. Well do I know how difficult it is; yet the good to be gained is worthy the effort. You say she is so total a stranger to your feelings, that she even supposes you to be an enemy to religious principles. If then you consider the pleasure it would afford her to find you seriously inquiring on such subjects, I think you will feel it to be an additional argument for the disclosure. Two or three years ago, my mind was in a state of extreme depression:—for months I had been conflicting with the most distressing fears, and longing to disburden myself to my father: at last I could no longer support myself, and breaking through, what I had thought insurmountable difficulties, I opened my mind to him completely. It was a struggle; but the immediate relief I experienced fully repaid me; and the unspeakable benefit I have derived

from the conversations I have since, from time to time, held with him, encourages me to persevere. * * *

"Mr. —— was very urgent with me not to give way to that unhappy reluctance to converse on religious subjects, so common to young persons: he says we do not know how much we are our own enemies by this reserve. If I understand you aright, you are giving way to discontent as to your outward circumstances. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness," and it is not for me to say you *are* happy; yet from all I know of you—your *friends*, *circumstances*, and *prospects*, you are one of the last persons whose situation would excite my commiseration. When I feel disposed to indulge discontent or fretfulness, which, alas! is sometimes the case—I always find it a good way to compare myself with the thousands of my fellow-creatures who are exposed to the miseries of poverty and want;—miseries which I never knew, and in the absence of which, I invent calamities, which the smallest exposure to those *real* ones would presently put

to flight. But these reflections, consolatory as they may be, will not always avail to restore our comfort. Discontent, no doubt, much oftener springs from internal causes, than immediately from those that are external: with affectionate friends, affluent circumstances, and while in the possession of all the world calls good, one may be very miserable. Happiness is very much in our own power; for it depends much more upon what we are, than upon what we *have*. But now I cannot help laughing at myself; for at this instant, while recommending contentedness to you, I am indulging an internal murmur, and vexing at what I ought to account a trifle: so much easier is it to talk, or to write, than to act!"

The tendency of the education bestowed upon his children by their father, as I have already said, was to give them a taste for every branch of knowledge that can well be made the subject of early instruction. This general taste was greatly promoted among them, about this time—that is, when Jane was in her sixteenth year, by Mr. Taylor's delivering philosophical lectures to a

number of young persons who were, in part, his pupils; and which were frequented by many of their friends. The lectures were rendered interesting by numerous graphic illustrations of every subject; and in the preparation of these diagrams, my father was assisted by his children, who were thus familiarized, in the readiest way, with the topics of the lecture. Though Jane's peculiar taste was of a different kind, she entered with the fullest zest into these pursuits; and ever retained a relish for matters of science. Especially for the general and more interesting facts of astronomy, she possessed a genuine taste. Her eye was never indifferent to the revelations of night:—she describes her own feelings in saying—

> "I used to roam and revel 'mid the stars;
> * * * * *
> When in my attic, with untold delight,
> I watched the changing splendours of the night."

Their father determined to qualify his daughters to provide for themselves the means of

independence, in some way suited to their tastes and capacities, and to his own circumstances. With this view, no plan seemed more eligible than to instruct them in that branch of the arts which he himself practised;—being a line in which several females have succeeded in gaining, not only independence, but distinction as artists. This plan, moreover, offered, at the same time, the advantage—so highly prized by our parents, of retaining their entire family under the paternal roof; and of carrying on a home education, while provision was made for their future comfort.

The actual consequences of this plan were not indeed precisely what their father had intended —that of making his daughters artists by profession; for after practising engraving during a few years, engagements and duties of a different kind were opened to them. But the indirect effects of this plan very plainly conduced to fit them for those engagements; while it secured other important advantages to the family. At the time when four of his children were thus

placed under their father's eye, to acquire the knowledge and practice of the arts, they were already imbued with a relish for literary and scientific pursuits; and conversation, which was freely allowed, was often of a kind to promote these tastes, and to keep intellect in activity. During a part of the day, some one of the pupils, who were under Mr. Taylor's care, read aloud; so that the double object was almost constantly pursued—of acquiring the means of independence, and of carrying on intellectual cultivation: nor, at any time, did the pressing engagements connected with the first object, wholly interrupt the pursuit of the second.

In this scene of united employment, and of mutual education, was formed that close and endeared family friendship, which was the source of their best enjoyments during the years that the sisters and brothers remained undivided at home; and which has continued to be their solace since they have been separated. Many passages occurring in the subjoined selection from her correspondence, evince how fully, and how warmly

Jane participated in the pleasures of this home friendship. In truth, her feelings of this kind were so strong as to form a leading feature of her character; and to require therefore distinct mention.

Lest her engagements with her father should produce a distaste or inaptness for domestic duties, Jane gave her assistance in the family, alternately with her sister: and her mother's solicitude that she should be thoroughly conversant with these employments, was not disappointed; for not even the excitement of her subsequent literary pursuits, ever impaired the domestic tastes and habits she acquired under her mother's care. Jane, far from being the mere literary lady —averse to household concerns, was not only happy to be occupied with them; but was really a proficient in employments of this sort.

My sister's taste for the arts was such as to make her excel in their lighter branches; and many of her drawings, still in possession of her family, display a true feeling of the beautiful in nature; and a peculiar niceness and elegance of

execution: but the business of engraving was not altogether suited to her talent, or taste; and it was relinquished without regret, when other paths of exertion opened before her. In a letter of an early date, she says—"The more I see of myself, and of the performances of others, the more I am convinced that nature never intended me for an artist: * * * no one can tell how my feelings are excruciated, when I am referred to, or my opinion asked, as an *artist*.—I look at the girls in the milliners' shops, with envy; because their business and their genius are on a level. I think it is what I shall come to at last."

All the intervals of time between the stated hours of employment in engraving, were carefully husbanded. Early rising was generally the custom of the family; and the morning and evening hours, during the winter, were employed, either in literary pursuits, or in the maintenance of friendly correspondences:—so that as few moments as can be imagined were lost from the day.

In mentioning family arrangements, and in detailing the lesser circumstances which gave their colouring to my sister's mind, or which may be necessary to be understood, to explain the allusions occurring in her correspondence, it is almost impossible to avoid what I would fain avoid —giving the history of a family along with that of one of its members. In this difficulty I can only throw myself upon the candour of that class of readers whom I would most wish to please— I mean those who feeling an interest in these minor incidents and descriptions, will not be disposed to impute an absurd egotism to the writer, who must either enter into such particulars, or confine himself to so meagre a narrative, as could be neither interesting nor instructive.

Our pleasures were always of a social kind:— at intervals, during the winter months, we were accustomed to spend the whole evening together, while my mother read aloud; and each was occupied with some lighter work of the pencil. Simple and easily procured as were these pleasures, they have been remembered with more

delight than, perhaps, often follows the most exciting amusements.

In a letter to her earliest friend, Jane W. my sister says—"We continue to pursue our employments with regularity:—seldom or ever encroaching on the usual hours. And though we sometimes wish our confinement was less; I believe we enjoy a greater proportion of real happiness than many who live a life of apparent ease and pleasure. We find it is employment that gives recreation its greatest charm; and we enjoy, with a double relish, little pleasures which, to those who are already fatigued with doing nothing, appear tiresome, or uninteresting. When I see people perpetually tormented with *ennui*—satiated with amusements—indifferent to every object of interest, I indeed congratulate myself that I have not one spare moment, in which these demons can assail me. You, my dear Jane, know the pleasures of industry; and you know that it is essential to our real happiness."

To another friend she writes—"I feel with you the approach of winter; and though I have

not to apprehend from it the distressing effects which you experience, yet the loss of our delightful evening walks—the desolated garden—the decaying vegetation—the shortening days—all tend rather to depress than to enliven. Yet I have much to love in winter: and I can truly say, I enjoy the hours of quiet industry it always introduces. Ann and I often remark to each other that, whatever agreeable recreations we may occasionally indulge in, and much as we really enjoy them, we are never so happy as when steadily engaged in the room where we engrave: that is our paradise:—you may smile at the comparison; and we know the inconveniences connected with our engagements there; but use reconciles us to them; and experience teaches us that comfort and happiness are compatible with these apparent inconveniences:—we have every inducement to industry; and we are thankful that that which is necessary, is also agreeable to us. We want nothing but a little more society:—one congenial family within our reach, would be a treasure: for though we do love each other,

and enjoy each other's society greatly; yet there are times when we long to recreate our wearied spirits with an intelligent friend."

During the summer our family parties were carried to some little distance in the country; and indeed, whenever weather permitted, the sisters and their brothers walked together. Jane records in many of her letters the happiness she tasted in these summer evening rambles. They served not merely the purpose of recruiting health and spirits; but tended greatly to cement the friendship to which the brothers, especially, have thought themselves indebted for the most important advantages. At the same time a taste for the beauties of nature was roused, and cherished, by the interchanged expression of delight in these ever-new sources of enjoyment. The superstitions of the heart were respected among us; and birth days were generally given up to social pleasures. Our family, at this time, was much secluded from extraneous society. The circle of my sister's early friends had been broken up, by the death of several of those who formed

it, and the removal of others; and an interval of three or four years elapsed before those friendships were formed of which the letters of the subjoined selection were the fruits. During this interval, the family learned to look, almost entirely, within itself for social pleasures. This, while it tended, as has been mentioned, to cherish family affection, must be confessed to have produced a rather exclusive feeling, which was hard, afterwards, to be broken up; and when, subsequently, distant friendships were formed, that were in the highest degree gratifying and exciting, an unfavourable feeling towards less congenial society nearer home, was perhaps increased. In Jane's mind this seclusive feeling was augmented by an extreme diffidence, and by a thousand nice sensibilities, which neither a wider intercourse with the world, nor the measure of public favour she obtained, ever entirely conquered. To the last, she would always gladly retreat from general society to the bosom of her family; or the circle of those friends whom she intimately knew and loved. Yet whatever feel-

ings of reserve might belong to my sister's character, I think it will not be said by any who knew her, that her behaviour ever indicated intellectual arrogance, or supercilious indifference towards persons whose worth might want the embellishments of education. Her distaste for vulgarity of sentiment and manners was strong; but *virtue* never suffered in her esteem from the mere deficiency of mental adornments. In explaining her conduct, on some particular occasion, in a letter to her mother, she says—"At any rate, my dear mother, do not accuse me of a vanity and arrogance which I, from my very heart disclaim. If, in comparison with some of my friends, others of them may appear less pleasing, or less intelligent, believe me, whenever I compare any with myself, the result is always humiliating. And perhaps nothing is less likely to raise any one highly in my esteem than their 'writing at the rate I do:'—my dear mother, do me the justice to believe that, at whatever crevice my vanity may endeavour to peep out, it will

ever fly from the literary corner of my character. I am not indifferent to the opinion of any one; though I never expect to acquire that sort of philosophic serenity which shall enable me to regard the whole circle of my acquaintance with the same glow of affection, or smile of complacency."

Whenever the health or the interests of those dear to her were at stake, the vigour of Jane's mind was roused;—her diffidence, her reserve, disappeared; and she exhibited not only disinterestedness, but a high degree of spirit and courage. In times of family affliction, the keenness of her sympathy made her actually a sufferer with those who suffered; especially if life seemed threatened, she endured the tortures of tender apprehension, in a degree that always impaired her own health. These dispositions were exercised during the autumn of the year 1801. At that time the scarlet fever prevailed very generally; and was, in many instances, fatal. It entered our family, Jane's elder sister,

and three of her brothers being affected by it. DECIMUS, the youngest of them, then about six years old, received the infection at school, and after less than a week's illness became its victim.

SECTION IV.

New Friendships, and Literary Engagements.

In the spring of the following year Jane visited London, for the first time since her childhood. It was during this visit that were commenced those lasting and inestimable friendships, from which she derived, through the remainder of her life, so much of the highest enjoyment; and to which she was wont to attribute the happiest influence upon her character. This visit was, in a manner, the commencement of a new era, both to her heart and understanding:—she was then in her nineteenth year; and was prepared by sensibilities of the liveliest kind, as well as by the long privation of social pleasures—except those found at home, to enjoy, to the full, this introduction to

a new circle. In this circle, I may venture to say, was found a very rare assemblage of excellence, in virtue, refinement, and intelligence. Most of the young friends with whom she had hitherto been connected were well educated, and intelligent; but among her new friends were some distinguished in their circle — and who would have been distinguished in any circle, by brilliant qualities of mind: they were, moreover, all of them, decided in their religious principles; and, for the most part, ruled by a spirit of serious piety. Among them, the alternation from literary to religious conversation was not felt to be difficult, or chargeable with incongruity. Instead of seeing, as she had before too often seen, piety and intelligence disjoined, she now saw them so united as to give attractiveness to the former, and true elevation to the latter.

She did not take her place among her new friends as an aspirant to literary distinction. Her talent had not yet been so called forth as to be felt by herself, or much known by others. She failed not, however, so strongly to interest those

to whom she was now introduced, as to make subsequent intercourse fully as much desired on one part, as on the other. Friendships, formed at the very age of romance, are very commonly broken up when the illusions on which they were founded are dissipated: but the friendships formed at this time, by my sister, were broken up only by death.

Although her disposition rendered her peculiarly averse to competition, of every kind; yet Jane could not but feel, indirectly, the stimulating influence of the friendships she now enjoyed; for they were precisely of the sort most likely to rouse her powers, and to render the exercise of them a means of winning pleasures which she ever valued more highly than any gratification of literary vanity. I think I may affirm that a very principal incentive—or perhaps the principal incentive, to her poetical efforts—at least till the hope of doing good came in place of it, was the desire of enhancing the regard of the few friends whom she loved. A sentiment of this kind so frequently occurs in the course of her correspond-

ence, that it cannot be doubted to have been a leading motive with her. Nor, indeed, did it seem in any degree impaired after she had been exposed to excitements which too often injure the finer feelings of the heart. To be loved, was, to her, a pleasure of incalculably higher price, than that of being admired. She first wrote to cherish the affection of her friends; and when, afterwards, she felt the obligation of a yet higher motive—that of making a faithful employment of the talent committed to her; still, that first feeling, being most congenial to her character, continued to yield her the sweetest reward of her labours.

Rarely does it happen that a sphere of peculiar usefulness is chosen, and entered upon by the deliberate determination of the agent. For the Author of all good, in the more usual order of his procedure, not only chooses who shall serve him; but leads those whom he calls into his service in a path of which, when they enter upon it, they know not the direction. Ambitious minds, it is true, often devise schemes big with

importance, which they imagine themselves destined to execute. But how seldom are such schemes borne onward by the prosperous breath of heaven!

Certainly it was with no ambitious intentions, or even with the expectation of ever being heard of as authors beyond the circle of their friends, that Jane and her sister first wrote for the press. The circumstances which led them to do so were, in themselves, trivial; nor were they quick to attach any great importance to this new occupation. Jane wrote chiefly because she was accustomed, in every thing, to be her sister's companion and partner.

She could not soon admit the idea that she was responsible for the exercise of a peculiar talent. This impression did, however, at length, gain its proper influence; and throughout the latter years of her life she was under a powerful sense of duty in this respect. I know it was her constant practice, whenever she took up the pen to write for the press, to implore guidance and assistance from Him, from whom "every good and every

perfect gift descends." Yet she could never receive the comfort of believing that she had done well in the charge committed to her; for both constitutional diffidence, and christian humility, inclined her to renounce every assumption of merit.

The first piece of Jane's which appeared in print was a contribution to the Minor's Pocket Book, for the year 1804. It is inserted among the Poetical Remains.* The pathos, simplicity, and sprightliness of "The Beggar Boy," even though the verse is fettered by the necessity of introducing a list of incongruous words, attracted much more attention than is often the lot of productions appearing in so humble a walk of literature. Her sister had contributed to the same publication for several preceding years, and had gained not less attention. The authors of these pieces became the subjects of inquiry; and it was not doubted by those who were competent to calculate the probable success of literary en-

* Vol. II. page 64.

terprizes, that a volume of pieces, exhibiting the same vivacity, truth of description, good taste, and sound sentiment, would certainly gain public favour.

Their father viewed with pleasure the new engagements of his daughters; and yet with some anxiety; for he was strongly averse to the idea of their becoming authors by profession. He therefore favoured their literary occupations so far as they might consist with the predominance of those pursuits, which he considered to be much more safe and certain, as the means of independence. Nor did their mother (who *then* would have thought any thing as probable as that she herself should become known as a writer) look with less watchfulness upon the effect of these new and exciting engagements. They were therefore carried on under just so much of restriction—not of restraint, as prevented their engrossing too much of thought and of time. Almost every thing written by my sisters for some years after they had first published, was composed, either before the regular occupations of

the day commenced, or after they were concluded. It was for the most part, after a day of assiduous application, that the pieces contained in the volumes of Original Poems, Rhymes for the Nursery, &c. were written: nor was it, I believe, till a much later period, that ever an entire day was indulged to the labours of the pen.

Under restrictions such as these, many of the most useful, and some, even of the most admired literary works have been produced. It is true that to those who are thus at once urged and impeded on the course of intellectual labour, such circumstances seem altogether unfavourable; and they are fain to imagine that, if freed from the fetter, and exempted from the goad, genius would make a wider circuit, and bring home richer treasures. But this supposition is not often well founded: for so great is the *vis inertiæ* of mind, so vague its spontaneous efforts, and so much higher and more painful is the effort necessary for useful production, than that of which most minds are at all capable,

when free from urgent motives, that, perhaps, these seemingly unfavourable circumstances ought to be welcomed as the stimulus necessary to put the mind in full activity. It must, however, be granted that there are regions of thought into which those minds only can rise which neither require the stimulus of secondary motives, nor can submit to be embarrassed by them.

The little volume of "Original Poems for Infant Minds, by several young Persons," was found to be so agreeable to children, and so useful in the business of early education, that, in a very short time, it obtained an extensive circulation:—it was quickly reprinted in America; and translated into German. What share of this success belongs to each of the contributors to the volume, could not be ascertained, even if to make the inquiry were of any importance. Jane, for her part, was ever forward to surrender all praise to others.

The success of this volume presently suggested

the production of a second, of a similar kind; and the young writers, gratified by the unexpected favour they had won, readily listened to the wishes of parents and children. Although children will not be long entertained, or effectively instructed by mere dulness; yet it is true that, even the more intelligent of them, may be entertained, and to a certain extent, instructed, by what is very trivial, or very much deformed by bad taste. But it is happy when the power of pleasing children, and of strongly engaging their attention, is so united with good taste and delicate tact in the choice of embellishments, and correct judgment, and sound principle in all that bears upon morals, as to give, to such productions, those negative merits that, in the work of education, are of higher importance than, perhaps, any other excellences. For, to furnish reading, without vulgarizing the taste, or contaminating the imagination, or enfeebling the judgment, or perverting the feelings, is the best praise that can be won by those who write for youth.

A part of my sister's contributions to some of these little works, was composed under rather peculiar circumstances, which must here be briefly narrated; because they served to mature her character, and to exhibit its solid excellences in a somewhat new and difficult situation.

SECTION V.

Visit to Lavenham.

DURING the autumn and winter of the year 1803, the alarm of a French invasion (and it has since appeared to have been a well founded alarm) prevailed through the country; especially along the eastern and southern coasts. Colchester was, at that time, a principal military station: the active movements, therefore, of a large body of troops, always in a state of readiness to meet the expected enemy, tended, of itself, to keep alive a constant impression of the impending danger: besides this, the military persons high in command on the station, were not backward in exciting the popular fears. Every day, some

whispered intimation of immediate danger, from "the best authority," circulated through the town, till a strong and general persuasion prevailed that it might, very probably, become the scene of the first conflict with the invaders. In this state of public feeling, not a few of those of the inhabitants whose means allowed them to do so, either left the town for a time; or made such arrangements as should enable them to leave it at an hour's notice.

At this time the house which, as has been mentioned, Mr. Taylor owned at Lavenham, was without a tenant: this circumstance seemed to invite the step which the fears of the time suggested—that of removing a part of the family thither, where a home would be always in readiness for those who remained, should it be needed. No material difficulty prevented the execution of this plan, and it was determined that Jane, with two of her brothers, and an infant sister, should remove to the vacant house. This separation of the family took place in the middle of October.

So great was the confidence placed by her pa-

rents in Jane's discretion and ability, that they committed this divided portion of their family to her care without anxiety; nor do I think that, in any instance, their confidence was abused or disappointed. Jane, though gifted with uncommon vivacity of spirit, was thoughtful and provident in a degree rarely found at her age. I can perfectly remember her active, laborious, and well concerted management of our little affairs. Such was her industry, that the new cares of a family were suffered, but in a small degree, to infringe upon the customary hours devoted to engraving; nor these upon her literary engagements; for her winter evenings were assiduously occupied in composing her share of some little works which soon after appeared.

The house stood in one of the least frequented parts of the town—the garden abutting upon a common: and the house, being only in part occupied, and scantily furnished, the aspect of things within, as well as without, was very much in harmony with the feelings of terror under which we had sought this asylum. Jane exhi-

bited, on this occasion, the strength of her mind: she was peculiarly subject to impressions of fear, both from real and imaginary dangers; but such was her resolution, and so great was the strength of principle, that, without wishing to retreat from her situation, she endured (what those who have more physical courage never endure) the terrors of a susceptible, and strongly excited imagination. This is, indeed, the courage of woman: and it may be questioned whether, in the possession and exercise of this high quality, the weaker sex does not often surpass the stronger.

Yet our banishment was not without its enjoyments; for Jane, who had a genuine domestic taste, soon gave an air of comfort to the part of the house we occupied; and we received, during our stay, the kindest attentions from several families with which ours had been on terms of intimacy while resident at Lavenham. I may here insert a few extracts from letters written by my sister at this time. To her friend Jane W. she writes—"I believe Mrs. W. has received from Ann a full account of our late flight to La-

venham; where, after the first alarm had subsided, we found a very pleasant and comfortable asylum, for some months. Though we felt it a little mortifying, that our neighbour Bonaparte should have it in his power to give us such a thorough panic, and so completely to derange all our affairs, yet, I own, I enjoyed my residence in the old spot exceedingly. Being in our own house, and for so long a time, I began to fancy myself once more an inhabitant; and it was not without pain that I took leave of a place that will ever be dear to me. During our stay at Lavenham, I took some delightful walks:—perhaps you have by this time forgotten most of them. I found it highly interesting once more to tread the oft trod path; and to recognize many a spot that had been the scene of former enjoyments. I know not whether to you it is so; but with me, no local attachments are so strong as those formed in childhood." * * *

"*Lavenham, October* 18, 1802.

'MY DEAR MOTHER,

"We have safely received your parcels and letters; which were very acceptable to us. I am now quite comfortably settled in my new house; and feel as if I had taken up my station here for a constancy. I manage capitally, as you may suppose; and 'give satisfaction.' I rise (I am sorry I cannot use the plural number) between six and seven, and get every thing in order before breakfast; but with all my endeavours I cannot begin engraving before eleven; to which I sit down again half an hour after dinner. We keep school very regularly; and Jemima comes on, both in reading and work. As to economy, I study it as much as possible; and, for our employments—they are certainly broken in upon at present; but will be less and less so, as we get more settled. We have not indulged in one walk yet; though the country and weather have been beautifully inviting: but we sit at the bow window next the garden; and quite enjoy ourselves."

From a letter of later date a few sentences may be extracted;—"I write this in hopes of your having it in time for the carrier, that you may know what things I most want. Of news I have none; and should not have written now, but for the reason above mentioned. Thank you for the carpet: it is quite a luxury to us. Although we brought every thing absolutely necessary, we have few conveniences; and though, if we were all huddled together in a barn, expecting the French to overtake us every instant, we might be very well contented with—

'An open broken elbow chair;
A candle cup without an ear;' &c.

Yet, living quietly, like our neighbours, we rather miss the conveniences we have been used to. I must confess we did not *fast* on the fast day; we went however in the morning to the prayer meeting; where we heard an excellent prayer from Mr. ——— of three quarters of an hour:—its length spoiled it; for we were all ready to faint.

In the afternoon we walked with the children. I thank you and father for what you say about walking; but really we seem very little to need more exercise than we have in the house and garden; where the children play continually. If we take a walk once or twice a week, just to look at the old places, and shew the children the new ones, it is quite sufficient."

Towards the close of her stay at Lavenham, Jane writes to her mother—"Could you see us just now; I cannot tell whether you would most laugh at, or pity us. I am sitting in the middle of the room, surrounded with beds, chairs, tables, boxes, &c. &c. And every room is the same: but our brains are in still greater confusion—not knowing now what to do. Have you heard this new alarm? It is said the French are actually embarking. Mr. —— strongly advises us not to move till we hear something more: so we are quite perplexed. We have at length resolved to wait, at all events, till Saturday; and if you write by return of post, we shall be able to act then according to your wishes; but in the mean time,

we shall be in a most delightful plight;—for most of the things are packed up; ready to go to-morrow: and then, if after all, we must stay it will be vexatious enough. If you find there is no foundation for the alarm, you will, of course, order us home directly. But do not fail to write, for we are quite deplorable.

"And now, having despatched all my business, let me thank my dear mother for her wholesome reprimand; which I hope will be a lesson for the future. I feel no inclination to apologize for myself; but acknowledge, upon reflection, I was wrong:—when I wrote I did not reflect. Yet this I can say, that, whatever opinion I may have formed of Mr. ——— I have never been otherwise than polite to him. What I said to L. was unpremeditated; and believe, if I had thought it probable that she would ever have met him, I should not have said what I did:—further, I declare, I do not despise the gentleman; and I wrote only for my amusement; though it should not have been at another person's expense."

The alarm of invasion scarcely subsided till the spring of the following year. But at the earliest appearance of returning security, Mr. Taylor gladly recalled his family to their home; and in the month of February we were once more united under his roof.

SECTION VI.

Publication of Original Poems, &c.

ABOUT this time commenced that series of deaths among her earlier young friends, to which frequent allusion is made in Jane's letters. The death of the four lovely sisters, of whom mention has already been made, was succeeded by that of several other endeared companions. But while early intimacies were thus dissolved, the more important and more lasting friendships that had now been formed, were strengthened, and became every year the sources of more pleasure and advantage. The summer months were always enlivened by visits from some of our young friends; and the records which I find, among my sister's papers, of these social enjoyments, shew that she

derived from them both the liveliest delight, and the most important benefits. The interruption occasioned by these visits to ordinary occupations, was not much greater than was needed to recruit the spirits, and to prepare the mind for the unremitting application of the winter months; for as soon as evening walks were no longer practicable, the labours of the pen were eagerly resumed; and, till the returning summer, rarely suspended.

Jane was, at this time, employed, conjointly with her sister, upon some little works to which their names have not since been attached. To this, indeed, they were always extremely reluctant; and yielded their names only when it was no longer within their option to withhold them. It may be added, that, if publicity was not sought for by my sisters, neither were they incited by any prospects of considerable pecuniary advantage; for, with one or two exceptions, the authors' share of the profits arising from the sale of their works never amounted to a sum which, if they had been dependant upon their

exertions in this line, could have afforded them a comfortable subsistence. I feel it to be due to my sister's memory—and not to her memory alone—thus explicitly to contradict a supposition entertained, I believe, by many persons, that the very extensive sale of their works has been the source of a large income to the authors.

In pecuniary matters, Jane was, at once, provident, exact, and liberal; but her tastes and habits made her averse to the care of acquiring money. Her feelings in writing were dissociated from the idea of gain; and she would neither personally interfere to secure what she might deem her rights; nor suffer her mind to be long disturbed by solicitudes of this sort. She received with gratitude to the Giver of all good, whatever share she actually obtained in the products of her writings; and strove, as far as possible, to put away from her thoughts the disquieting recollection of what that share might have been. Often have I heard her break off a conversation on pecuniary matters, by an excla-

mation of this kind—"Ah well, it is God who determines what I am to have; and if I were to gain all that I might fairly gain, He would know how, in other ways, to reduce the amount to the exact sum at which he sees best to fix my income."

The success of her first attempt to write for the press administered no more stimulus to my sister's mind, than her diffidence needed. Still she considered herself as merely filling up a subordinate part; and it was with no feigned humility that, in addressing her sister, she says—

"My Ann, you had taken the lyre,
And I from the pattern you set,
Attempted the art to acquire;
And often we play a duet.
But those who, in grateful return,
Have said they were pleased with the lay,
The discord could always discern;
And yet I continued to play."

The second volume of Original Poems met

with as much favour as the first;—both volumes were soon reprinted in America; and have continued there, as well as in England, to be very generally used in the nursery.

From the time of which I am now speaking, the history of my sister's mind will best be given by herself, in the Extracts from her Correspondence: the part, therefore, of her biographer, will chiefly be to give such connecting facts as will render the continued perusal of the subjoined selection intelligible and interesting. The sound good sense which has recommended the latter productions of her pen, began then to temper the sprightliness of her fancy; and the letters of each succeeding year will exhibit a very marked progression in this respect. For not only did her understanding ripen, but the false diffidence by which it had been shackled was gradually removed by the successful exercise of her talents. In some young persons self confidence occasions a precocious developement of the reasoning powers; while in others, a morbid diffidence retards the expansion of them, and

even protracts a certain jejuneness of style in writing, long after the substance of thought has become worthy of mature years. This was very much the case with Jane:—if earlier in life she had felt herself possessed of the powers she afterwards displayed, she might have moved in a wider and a higher sphere. She continued to address herself to childhood and youth, not merely because she thought that to be the work for which she was fitted; but, in great measure, because, within this humbler sphere, she thought herself safe; and that, while she moved not out of it, the dreaded charge of presumption, could not well be brought against her. On many of the most important topics of religion, morals, and manners, she thought justly, and felt strongly; and seemed only to need the persuasion that she could gain the attention of mature readers, in order to do so with success. But though representations of this kind were often made to her, she could never be prevailed upon to make the attempt.

The little volume of "Rhymes for the Nursery"

appeared not long after the two of Original Poems:—to this volume no one but my sisters contributed. Their aim was to present ideas and to awaken emotions in a form adapted to the earliest childhood. The question which the authors propose in their preface—"Whether ideas adapted to the comprehension of infancy admit the restrictions of rhyme and metre"—seems now to be pretty well determined in the affirmative; for it may be said to have been "carried by acclamation" from thousands of infant voices, that rhyme and metre are the friends of infancy; and that far from being "restrictions" upon the communication of ideas, they open the avenues of intellect more readily than any other means. Experience proves that poetry itself, as distinguished from mere rhyme and metre, though not fully apprehended by the mind of a child, has truly a charm for it. Those who have been engaged in the instruction of the children of the poor will grant it to be a fact, that if children of active minds are allowed to make their own selection of hymns to be

committed to memory, they will, for the most part, choose rather such as have something of the spirit of poetry in them, than those which might seem the best adapted to their comprehension, by being altogether prosaic in their style. The Rhymes for the Nursery, though in phraseology brought down to a lower level, are, many of them, more poetical in their character than the Original Poems; and it is believed that the success of the one has been, at least, fully equal to that of the other.

Jane's literary pursuits were facilitated about this time, and her comfort much increased, by the appropriation of a room to her exclusive use; which she fitted up to her own taste. This attic was secluded from the rest of the house;—the window commanded a view of the country, and a "tract of sky" as a field for that nightly soaring of the fancy of which she was so fond. Our parents always considered the exclusive occupation of a chamber or study, by each of their family, as a most important advantage, both for the cultivation of the mind, and the cherishing of devotional

habits. So far as it was possible we were all favoured in this respect; -and Jane was always forward to avail herself of the privilege. Addressing a literary friend, she thus describes her study :—

"My verses have certainly one advantage to boast, beyond any that ever before escaped from my pen;—that of being composed in my own study. Whether instigated by the sight of your retired literarium, or what, I cannot exactly tell; but certain it is, that one of my first engagements on my return home, was to fit up an unoccupied attic, hitherto devoted only to household lumber: this I removed by the most spirited exertions, and supplied its place with all the apparatus necessary for a poet; which, you know, is not of a very extensive nature:—a few book-shelves, a table for my writing-desk, one chair for myself, and another for my muse, is a pretty accurate inventory of my furniture. But though my study cannot boast the elegance of yours, it possesses one advantage which, as a poet, you ought to allow surpasses them all—it commands a view of

the country;—the only room in the house, except one, which is thus favoured; and to me this is invaluable. You may now expect me to do wonders. But even if others should derive no advantages from this new arrangement, to me, I am sure they will be numerous. For years I have been longing for such a luxury; and never before had wit enough to think of this convenient place. It will add so much to the comfort of my life, that I can do nothing but congratulate myself upon the happy thought; and I demand a large share of your poetical sympathy on the occasion. Although it is morning, and, I must tell you, but little past six, I have half filled this sheet, which capability I attribute, chiefly, to the sweet fields that are now smiling in vernal beauty before me."

SECTION VII.

Religious Feelings.

THERE is reason to believe that the advantage of being able to fulfil, literally, the command "to enter into the closet, and shut the door," was not slighted; but that religious exercises were more regularly attended to, by my sister, from this time; and that a consequent improvement in the state of her mind took place; though it still fell short of the peace and hope which become christian faith.

"Those," she says, in a letter to a friend, "who are in the habit of reading their own hearts, know that the heart may be as devotedly fixed on what is in itself a truly worthy and proper object of regard, as on the sinful vanities of

the world: and if that object be any thing but God, its intrinsic value diminishes nothing from the idolatry of the feeling. Perhaps I need not blush to enumerate those worldly pleasures on which my heart is most intent—but I know I ought to blush, could I disclose the high, monopolizing place they hold there:—they reign;—when will these idols fall before the ark of God? are they to be torn from their hiding-place as yours have been? Oh! why have I not had this trial rather than you?

You have well described the difficulty, the exertion, requisite for real and fervent prayer. I am glad that I do know the difference between that, and the offering of lifeless petitions: you rightly affirmed that "true prayer surpasses every other mental exercise, and is entirely beyond human attainment, without divine aid. Certainly no one ever prayed who was not a christian; but though sometimes I have found every faculty, for a few moments, intensely engaged in the exercise, how can I hope this was really prayer, when I remember the indifference, the coldness, the

reluctance, that characterize the general state of my mind. Yet, in the midst of the darkness that surrounds my own mind, I rejoice, my dear friend, in the light which shines upon yours."

How far this want of the comfort which religion should afford, might have been attributed to an obscured apprehension of "the hope set before us in the Gospel," is a question perhaps worthy of inquiry;—that it was not the consequence of cynical feelings or habits will be made apparent by a quotation from a letter addressed to a friend, whose mind was evidently perverted by sentiments of this sort.

"In a certain sense, I may say with you, 'that my views of life are dark and melancholy;' yet I believe when you say so, you mean something more than I do. You do not permit yourself to receive the comforts and delights that are offered you by Providence with 'a merry heart, giving God thanks.' Now I think that though, when compared with heavenly happiness, the best joys of earth should appear mean and trifling in our eyes; yet, considered in themselves, as they were

given for our enjoyment, surely a cheerful and grateful delight in them, must be even acceptable to our all-bountiful Father. When we survey all our comforts—a happy home, affectionate friends, easy circumstances, and the numerous train of common mercies, and social delights, ought we to call the prospect 'dark and melancholy.' Surely the cheerful song of praise befits us better than the sigh of discontent. Do not suppose I would plead for the gay amusements and dangerous pleasures of the world. I am as firmly convinced of their evil tendency as you can be; and would avoid them as carefully. I am referring only to the natural comforts, and lawful enjoyments of life; and of these even I would say, that we must still 'hold them as if we held them not; and use them as not abusing them.'"

The same strain of good sense appears in a letter of consolation, addressed to this friend, soon afterward, on the death of a beloved brother. "Afflictions rightly improved are indeed blessings; yet how apt are we to abuse them by receiving impressions very different from what they were

intended to produce. I mention this from a fear that, notwithstanding your cheerful acquiescence in the Divine will, you do, in a degree, mistake the intentions of Providence. I hear your cough is become habitual; and that you firmly expect, and almost wish to join your dear brother very soon. Now I am persuaded it is not merely from a selfish motive that I would say, do not court death; but I am sure it is the language of reason, and the voice of duty. It cannot be a wholesome state of mind, even in the midst of the severest trial, when it is looking to death as a relief:—the holy desire 'to depart and to be with Christ,' is very different from the desire to depart that we may be with some dear friend; which can arise only from a worldly principle. In sending these sorrows, God usually intends to fit us for living more to his glory here below; and though they certainly contain a loud warning to 'prepare to meet our God,' as we know not how soon our turn may come; it is shewing a degree of impatience under them to say—I cannot bear the separation—let *me* die also. Let me

intreat you then, my dear E. to take great and constant care of your health; for vain is the attention of your friends, unless you join your own endeavours; especially restrain yourself from that ardent pursuit of whatever happens to engage your present interest, which, I am very sure has greatly undermined your health already; and which, if persisted in, will assuredly destroy it. May your soul also prosper. I shall rejoice to hear that you have been led by this affliction, more confidently than ever, to 'lay hold of the only hope set before us.'"

Unconsciously to herself, a real progression appears, from her letters, to have been taking place in Jane's religious feeling: if not more happy in hope, she was more established in principle. In a letter dated May, 1800, she says—"Well, I hope I can say that I have different views of life, and a higher ambition than formerly. I dare not trust my treacherous heart a moment. But yet, upon examination, I think I may say, I should feel at least contented, to pass silently and soberly through the world with a

humble hope of reaching heaven at the end of my pilgrimage. I have many, many difficulties in my way; and when I compare the state of my mind with that which is required of those who follow Jesus, and see how much must be done ere I can attain it, I have no other comfort than this—'With God all things are possible.' Yes, indeed, my dear E. we have each of us dangerous snares to avoid, and as you say, temptations to love the world. But I well know, and with shame I would allow it, that yours are far more inviting, and require more courage and self-denial to resist, than mine: yet you escape, and I become the victim. With half your graces and accomplishments, what should I have been! You mention talents;—but indeed you mistake in supposing that the accidental success that has attended my feeble efforts, has been very hurtful to me. I wish I had no worse enemies than my wits. I do not deny—it would be ungrateful to do so, that the approbation we have met with, and the applause — especially of some whose opinion was particularly precious, have been

sources of constant satisfaction: and perhaps occasionally, my weak mind has been partly overset by them. Yet I think I may say my humiliations have generally counterbalanced such feelings; and kept my mind in *equilibrio*. No, though I own my muse has done me a few good turns, for which I shall always feel grateful; yet she has been the means of procuring me as many good, wholesome mortifications, as any personage, real or ideal, that I know of. I do not say all this to prove that I am not vain; for I am:—if I were not, you know, I should not be liable to mortifications; nor have I yet thrown aside my pen in disgust; though I have many a time longed to do so."

Her letters about this time, when notoriety as an author was new to her, abound with similar sentiments. "We have been visiting some friends in the country, who correspond with the description you give of yours. They possess that natural intelligence, sound sense, and intrinsic excellence, which cannot fail to render them interesting, though deficient in cultivation, and un-

polished in matters of taste. Now among these friends, our poor superficial acquirements blaze away most splendidly. But though I am conscious of feeling elated at such times, yet it is checked by a humiliating sense of my real inferiority. I see them living in the daily exercise of virtues and graces to which I never approached. In all that is sound, sterling, durable—in all that a heart searching God can approve, I see how far I fall short; and then, how contemptible and worthless is all in which I may have the advantage. Although that degree of vanity which amounts to conceit, and obvious and obtrusive self complacency, must, I think, be absolutely incompatible with dignity and refinement of mind, as well as with the christian graces; yet where is the heart, in which, in a state more or less subdued, it exists not?—and those who are wont to speak and to think meanly of themselves—who are willing to prefer others to themselves—and who are continually deploring their deficiencies, yet, after all evince great ignorance of their own hearts, if they imagine that, beneath

all this humiliation, no seeds of vanity lie concealed: in truth, they may spring up no where more luxuriantly than in the soil that is watered by the tears of self-condemnation. With respect to this baleful weed, it may with peculiar propriety be said—

> 'We cannot bear diviner fruit,
> Till grace refine the ground.'

Here is the only remedy—religion, and religion only, can humble the proud spirit to the dust."

Jane's intimate friends were not ignorant of the embarrassed state of her religious feelings; nor were they backward in affording to her the direction and encouragement she seemed to require. These offices of christian friendship were acknowledged by her with lively affection.

"With feelings of sincere gratitude and love, I would again thank you, my very dear A. for the tender concern you manifested on my behalf; and the readiness with which you afforded the advice and encouragement I solicited. You are

highly privileged, dear A. in having it in your power to promote pleasure and cheerfulness wherever you appear. Your visit was truly a season of sunshine; and how sweetly refreshing are such occasional gleams, breaking forth from a clouded sky—and such indeed is mine. I could bear the roughness of the road, if it were but bright overhead: however, I dare not turn back; and you, dear A. while going on your way rejoicing, will not, I am sure, be unmindful of your benighted friend. It may be long before we meet again; but my heart has been accustomed to love the absent; and my thoughts have been trained to fly towards every point of the compass; and whether at ——, or at ——, they will frequently attend you, laden with sincere affection."

In reply to a letter of religious consolation and advice, addressed, about this time, to Jane, by another friend, she says — "I have already thanked you for a letter received two months ago; but I have yet to assure you of what you seem to entertain a doubt—that the principal subject of it was very far from being uninterest-

ing or unwelcome to me. I own, indeed, I do feel a backwardness in introducing these topics; and that, as you say, greatly arising from a false shame, that ought not to be encouraged; but I have other impediments; and if I cannot speak with entire freedom on religious subjects, it is not indeed because I cannot 'confide in you;' but for want of confidence in myself. I dread much more than total silence, falling into a common place, technical style of expression, without real meaning and feeling; and thereby, deceiving both myself and others. I well know how ready my friends are to give me encouragement; and how willing to hope the best concerning me; and as I cannot open to them the secret recesses of my heart, they put a too favourable construction on my expressions. You will not then impute it to a want of confidence, though I cannot speak otherwise than generally on this subject. * * * Yet I do hope that I have of late seen something of the vanity of the world; and increasingly feel that it cannot be my rest. The companions of my youth are no more:—our

own domestic circle is breaking up:—time seems every day to fly with increased rapidity; and must I not say 'the world recedes.' Under these impressions, I would seek consolation where only I know it is to be found. I long to be able to make heaven and eternity the home of my thoughts, to which, though they must often wander abroad on other concerns, they may regularly return, and find their best entertainment. But I always indulge with fear and self suspicion in these most interesting contemplations; and doubtless, the enjoyments arising from them belong rather to the advanced christian, than to the doubting, wandering beginner. I am afraid I feel poetically, rather than piously on these subjects;—and while I am indulging in vain conjectures on the employments and enjoyments of a future state, I must envy the humble christian who, with juster views, and better claims, is longing 'to depart and be with Christ.' Nor would I mistake a fretful impatience with the fatigues and crosses of life, for a temper weaned

from the world. I could, indeed, sometimes say—

'I long to lay this painful head,
And aching heart, beneath the soil;—
To slumber in that dreamless bed
From all my toil.'

And I have felt too those lines—

'The bitter tear—the arduous struggle ceases here—
The doubt, the danger, and the fear,
All, all, for ever o'er.'

But these feelings, though they may afford occasional relief, I could not indulge in."

The extracts from her correspondence will exhibit, in those of later date, the same constitutional feelings, indeed; but counterpoised by a more established faith, and a brighter hope. Yet the improvement took place too insensibly to be ascertained in its immediate causes. At the time the above cited letters were written, perhaps no

advice, no representations of the simplicity and certainty of that offer of happiness which is made to us in the Scriptures, would have availed to dispel the obscurity and discomfort of my sister's mind; for constitutional feelings will be long in admitting amelioration.

SECTION VIII.

Domestic Feelings—Publication of The Associate Minstrels—Hymns for Sunday Schools.

In the course of the year 1809, our long united family was separated, by the removal of two of its members to London; and if the expressions of regret, on this subject, with which Jane's letters abound, were to be quoted, they would seem, to many readers, to go beyond the merits of the occasion. But none of her feelings were more vivid than those of family affection; and, almost blind to the reason of the case, she would fain have held the endeared circle entire, at the cost of all secular interests. "I regard," she says, "this separation, as one of the greatest sorrows I

have ever known. I cannot view it merely as a parting with a friend, whom I may hope to meet again in a few months; for though our interviews may be frequent, our separation as companions is final. We are to travel different roads; and all the time we may actually pass together, in the course of occasional meetings in our whole future lives, may not amount to more than a year or two of constant intercourse."

This foreboding was falsified by the event; for in fact, only a year or two of separation took place between Jane and the brother to whom she here refers;—excepting that short interval, it was his happiness to be the constant companion of her life.

In a letter written to her brothers, during this separation, she says,—"Oh this cruel separation! It would have killed me to have known, when we first parted, how complete it would be. I am glad we deceived ourselves with the hope of keeping up frequent intercourse by letters and visits;—it saved us a severer pang than any we then endured. These painful reflections are re-

vived by the disappointment of our fond hopes of a speedy reunion, which is now rendered not only distant, but very doubtful. You, engaged in business, and surrounded with friends, cannot feel as we do on this subject. We have nothing to do but to contemplate our cheerless prospects; or to think of the days that are past. I do not mean it reproachfully, when I say, that you will soon learn to do without us;—it is the natural consequence of your situation; and we ought to be reconciled to the 'common lot.' But how can I forget the happy years in which we were every thing to each other. I am sometimes half jealous of our friends; especially of ———, who now has that confidence which we once enjoyed. But I will not proceed in this mournful strain; and do not think, my dear brothers, that I am charging you with neglect, or any decrease of affection; though I do sometimes anticipate, and that with bitter regret, the natural effect of a long continued separation."

So eminently characteristic of my sister's mind were feelings of this sort, that I must exhibit

them in one or two more quotations from her letters to her brothers.

" We have not yet tried separation long enough to know what its effects will eventually be. I dread lest, in time, we should become so accustomed to it, as to feel contented to live apart, and forget the pleasure of our former intercourse: and I cannot suffer myself to believe what, after all, is most probable, that we never shall be united again. It is a forlorn idea; for what will two or three flying visits in the course of the year amount to. Life is short; and we are, perhaps, half way through it already. Well, I ought to be thankful that so large a portion of it we have passed in company; and that, the best part too: and as to the future, if I could be sure that years of separation would not, in the least, estrange our affections from each other, and that the glow which warms the youthful breast, would never be chilled by our passage through a cold, heartless world, I would be content. But the idea of becoming such brothers and sisters as we see every where, is incomparably more painful than

that of a final banishment, in which we should love each other as we now do.

"We still indulge the hope of renewed intercourse: this hope may indeed be fallacious; but I cannot reject it. In the mean time, we do, and we will continue to love each other; and this is consolation. Long before the dear circle was broken up, I looked forward to the time of separation with dread; chiefly from the apprehension lest that loveliest of plants, family affection (which, in spite of many storms, had been successfully reared and tenderly cherished among us) should droop, and in time wither; when the distracting cares of life should call off our attention from it. For my own part, I have scarcely yet made the trial; for although the separation has taken place, yet, as my situation remains the same, I have found no difficulty in retaining and cultivating that affection which flourished when we were companions; and I am willing to believe that the scenes you have passed through since you left your home have rather increased than lessened your attachment to it. It must be de-

lightful, cheering, soothing, to turn from the chilling selfishness of those with whom you must often have to do, to the affection of your family, and friends;—to know that there are those who do, and who always will love you;—whose happiness, in a great measure, depends upon yours, and who consider your interest the same as their own.

"From experience I know how baleful it is to the disposition to be placed in circumstances in which the malevolent passions are liable to be roused, and in which we have to be concerned with those whom it is not only impossible to love, but whom it seems a sort of virtue to dislike. There is the same difference between love and hatred, as between happiness and misery: and more real enjoyment in the pains of the former, than in the gratifications of the latter. I envy those who can look with an eye of benevolent compassion upon the lowest instances of human depravity:—who, discerning in their own hearts the seeds of the same hateful dispositions, feel more gratitude for the providential restraints to which they

must attribute the difference, than anger towards those who have wanted these advantages."

These regrets were soon afterwards diverted by literary interests. Poetry had formed the bond of union in that circle of friends in which Jane thought herself so happy to be included; and about this time a volume was projected, in which the talents of those of them to whom poetical composition was familiar should be conjoined. My sister was reluctantly persuaded to take her part in this volume:—she expresses her feelings on the subject in a letter to the friend who conducted the work:—alluding to some verses which she was solicited to surrender for publication, she says:—

"They were written to gratify my own feelings, and not for the 'Wreath;' (such was then proposed to be the title of the volume) yet you have pressed them into the service; and what shall I say? I feel that, in permitting them to be published, I make some sacrifice;—as indeed all do who once begin to express their feelings

in rhyme; for sentiments and feelings that, in plain prose, would only be whispered in secret to a chosen friend, in this form gain courage, and court the gaze, and bear the ridicule of the vulgar and unfeeling. Since I have had time to think soberly about the 'Wreath'—for this must always be its title, I have felt far less anxious about the share I am to have in it. Now I am not going to tease you with any of my 'morbid humility;' for I am as weary of it, and as angry with it, as you are; but I must just tell you how it affects me. I think I know pretty well how to estimate my poetical talent; at least, I am perfectly persuaded I do not *underrate* it; and, in comparison with my blooming companions in this garland, I allow my pieces to rank as the leaves; which are, you know, always reckoned a necessary, and even pleasing part of a bouquet: and I may add that I am not only contented, but pleased with this station;—it is safe, and snug; and my chief anxiety is not to suffer any thing ridiculous, or very lame to appear:—with these views, I consent. The opinion of the little hallowed circle of

my own private friends is more to me than the applauses of a world of strangers. To them my pieces are already known; by them their merits and their faults are already determined; and if they continue to smile kindly upon my simple muse, she will not, I think, easily be put in ill-humour."

This volume was published under the title of "The Associate Minstrels." My sister's contributions to it (the volume being out of print) I have placed among the Poetical Remains now published: they were, none of them, written with any idea of publication; but were the simple expressions of feeling on particular occasions. They exhibit the tender playfulness of her fancy, and the warmth of her heart; but the vigour she afterwards displayed had not then been roused. Yet she has since written nothing more characteristic of herself, or perhaps more beautiful, than the "Remonstrance to Time." In this piece—in the Birth-day Retrospect, and in one or two of the pieces, which will be found among the Remains, she has given the portrait of her own

mind with so much truth and life, that those who knew her, seem to see and to converse with her while perusing them. To portray itself, her mind needed only the mild excitement of her habitual feelings. But to display its force, it required the stimulus of the strongest extraneous motives. The productions of her pen under these different impulses are widely dissimilar; and perhaps will hardly both please the same reader.

Up to the time to which I am now referring, Jane had written chiefly as an expression of spontaneous feeling; but after the conviction of possessing a talent which might be rendered useful to others was admitted by her, she very rarely wrote for her own gratification, as she had been wont to do. The Poetical Remains contain, however, a few exceptions to this remark; and these are the expressions of feelings of a much higher order than such as were familiar to her in early life.

Soon after the publication of the volume just mentioned, my sisters entered upon a task of peculiar difficulty—that of composing a volume of *Hymns* for the use of children. This difficulty

will not be thought lightly of by those who have had much experience in the business of education; and who have allowed themselves ingenuously to perceive the many perplexities which meet the teacher in his attempts to impart to a child any religious ideas that go beyond the mere notion of invisible power; for not only do these notions seem to surpass his apprehension—they are felt to have in them a repellant contrariety to the prejudices of our fallen nature, in the very earliest developement of the moral principle. The utmost perhaps, that can be done is to employ a phraseology, and to use illustrations, so well adapted to the infant mind, as that no unnecessary difficulty shall be added to that which is inevitable; and that the memory may, as it were, be taken possession of by notions of religion, before the slumbering evils of the heart are fully quickened. "I think," says my sister in a letter of this date, "I think I have some idea of what a child's hymn ought to be; and when I commenced the task, it was with the presumptuous determination that none of them should fall short

of the standard I had formed in my mind. In order to this, my method was to shut my eyes, and imagine the presence of some pretty little mortal; and then endeavour to catch, as it were, the very language it would use on the subject before me. If, in any instances, I have succeeded, to this little imaginary being I should attribute my success. And I have failed so frequently, because so frequently I was compelled to say—'Now you may go, my dear, I shall finish the hymn myself.' "

The authors, in their advertisement justly say that, "The Divine Songs of Dr. Watts, so beautiful, and so justly admired, almost discourage, by their excellence, a similar attempt; and lead the way, where it appears temerity to follow." The want, however, of a greater number of hymns of this kind, has always been felt by parents; and parents, very generally, have seemed to think the want well supplied in this volume. It was soon after followed by a smaller collection of a similar kind, adapted to the use of Sunday schools. In this last, the attempt to simplify language has,

perhaps, been carried as far as it is desirable that it should be carried. If one might judge by the appearance of the manuscript copy of these hymns—its intricate interlineations, and multiplied revisions, it would seem that many of them cost the author more labour than any other of her writings. But a labour of this kind suited well Jane's habitual feelings; for it was at once wholly undisturbed by any ambitious desire of literary distinction, and blessed with the hope of extensive usefulness.

SECTION IX.

Removal to Ongar—First and second Visit to Ilfracombe.

TOWARDS the close of the year 1810, Mr. Taylor resigned his ministerial charge at Colchester; and about the same time of the following year, removed with his family to Ongar, having accepted the invitation of the dissenting congregation in that town to become their pastor. During the time in which the place whither her father might remove was uncertain, Jane writes thus to a friend.—

"It is a strange sensation to survey the map of England without an idea of what part of it we are to occupy. Yet perhaps we feel less anxiety about it than you may suppose. Not to be fur-

ther removed from London than we now are, is our chief solicitude; and to be nearer would be very desirable; more especially on account of being able to see our dear brothers more frequently. For my own part, might I choose a situation, it should be a very retired one, among plain good people, whom we could love:—a village, not a town. My love of quiet and retirement daily increases; and I wish to cultivate this taste:—it suits me, and does me good. To part with our house here—the high woods, and the springs, will cost me a struggle; and more especially my dear quiet attic. Might I hope to find such another in our next encampment, I should be less uneasy."

These wishes were, for the most part, gratified in the removal to Ongar; especially as they regarded the house—its accommodations, and its vicinity: and Jane once more enjoyed her room; which, though not an *attic*, was all she could desire. The Castle House which my father occupied during the first three years after his removal to Ongar, is highly agreeable in itself, and in

the objects which surround it; combining a picturesque antiquity, with the air of seclusion and comfort.

But it was only for a few months that Jane was an inmate at home, during the time her father occupied the Castle House. For soon after the removal of the family to Ongar, she and her sister—much more from the suggestion of their friends, than from the instigation of their own wishes, formed the design of establishing a school; and some measures were taken in furtherance of the plan; and among these preparatory measures, was their spending a great part of the following winter in London, with a view to perfect themselves in some lesser accomplishments. But obstacles arising, their averseness to the plan prevailed; it was quickly abandoned; and they joyfully returned to their father's house.

Her frequent absence from home, her increasing literary engagements, and other circumstances, had, before this time, induced my sister to relinquish the practice of the arts, as a profession:

this change in her occupations was made without reluctance; though she always retained a taste for drawing; and practised it occasionally, for the gratification of her friends. She retained also, without any diminution, that vivid relish of the beauties of nature which perhaps seldom exists in its highest degree, apart from some knowledge and practice of the imitative arts. Her taste was gratified at this time by a residence of some months in the most romantic part of Devonshire. The occasion of this visit must be mentioned, as it determined the course of my sister's life for several succeeding years.—

The brother to whose part it has fallen to prepare this memoir had lately spent some months in the west of England, for the recovery of his health;* and had returned to London in a great degree restored: but on the approach of the following winter, being advised to seek a milder

* Although it is foreign to my subject, I cannot pass the mention of my first visit to Devonshire without a grateful reference to the kindness of the friends with whom those agreeable months were passed. The hospitalities then, and subsequently received, will always live in my recollection.

climate, it was determined that his two sisters should accompany him to Devonshire.

Having just before roamed over a great part of that delightful county, and become familiar with its beauties, it was to him a pleasure of the liveliest kind to introduce his sisters to these novel scenes. To young persons whose taste for the beauties of nature is very strong, and who have been accustomed only to the uniform surface, and the simple rural amenities of the eastern counties, a first sight of the scenery of the west of England excites the most vivid delight. Jane felt these pleasures to the full; and even after a second, and a lengthened residence at Ilfracombe, had rendered her familiar with its scenery, the pleasure with which she rambled daily among its rocks was undiminished.

During the whole of the first winter passed at Ilfracombe, the change in my sister's mode of life was almost as great as could be:—for instead of the assiduous occupation of time to which she had always been accustomed, the mornings,

whenever the weather permitted, were spent in social or solitary rambles; and the evenings, most often, in agreeable society.—And some highly agreeable society we did indeed find at Ilfracombe. Except in maintaining correspondence with her friends, I do not know that she wrote any thing, during this winter: the time, however, was not lost; for she not only improved in health, but gained expansion of mind, enriched her imagination, and acquired those more free habits of thought which are scarcely compatible with unremitted application.

Yet she was impatient of this long continued inaction. "I have found (but not now for the first time) that any great external interest, for a continuance, will not agree with my mind:—it is living upon dainties, instead of plain food. Accustomed to expect my evening's entertainment from myself, in some kind of mental exertion, a complete relaxation from this, and depending wholly, for many months, on external means of gratification, is a kind of indulgence

which will not do to live upon: my mind never had so long a holiday; and I feel it is time to send it home."

Referring to the same time, in a letter of a later date, she writes—

"As to my employments during the winter, it is very true I have been disappointed in my expectations of writing; but I have not neglected a favourable opportunity; for none has presented itself. I went to Ilfracombe expecting to find there complete retirement, and much leisure. You know how mistaken we were in this calculation. The engagement of the evening with our welcome visitors, completely deprived me of the only time I can ever profitably devote to writing. I am far, however, from thinking this a lost winter; or that I have enjoyed a too expensive pleasure; for I would not but have known and seen what I have at Ilfracombe, for twice the expence of time and money. I do, however, look forward, with much satisfaction, to the prospect of resuming my former habits, after this long relaxation: and whenever I take

up the pen again, I hope to reap the advantage of the past winter."

The swell of the sea is not indeed so great at Ilfracombe, as on the north-western coast of Cornwall; but when the pent-up tides of the Bristol channel, meet a hurricane from the Atlantic; and the contention falls upon the steep and towering precipices of this coast, the beauty and terror of a sea storm can hardly be better displayed. Not at all intimidated by rain or wind, Jane would seldom stay within, when the breaking of the sea over the house in which we lodged announced the coming storm.

The neighbourhood of Ilfracombe has, also, in several spots, the charm of rural and sequestered beauty. The deep ravins which commence upon the elevated moors, and run down to the sea side, are, many of them, thickly wooded, and studded with stone-built, and ivy-covered cottages: and though not on the largest scale, some of these glens present the most finished combinations of picturesque objects. Scenery of this kind depends upon the decorations of summer,

for its effect, much less than the wooded slopes of a merely rural country; for *there* it is alone the clustered evergreens that hide the desolation of the season; but *here* the permanent forms are equally beautiful with those that are evanescent; and indeed, many of these spots produce a more congruous effect upon the mind, in the gloom of a December afternoon, than under the splendours of July.

The description with which the Fragment opens, that stands first among the Poetical Remains, will be recognized by the reader who has traversed the coast of North Devon. The peculiar scenery of Lea filled Jane's imagination:—it was her favourite walk; and having heard the melancholy story of a secluded being who, with his maniac daughter, had long inhabited one of its few dwellings, she fixed upon it as the scene of a history which floated in her mind for three or four years; but of which no more than what is now published, was ever committed to paper.

Early in the spring of the year 1813, we pre-

pared to leave Ilfracombe: in the expectation of doing so, my sister says—

"In a week or two we expect to take our leave of Ilfracombe:—thus ends another short chapter of the little history of life:—like many others, its contents have not corresponded with the title:—it has disappointed our fears, and greatly exceeded our expectations of enjoyment: may it end with a hymn of praise!"

The most romantic part of the North Devon coast is about eighteen miles east of Ilfracombe: this spot we determined to visit, on our way home:—the excursion is described by Jane in a letter written at Linton, to her father and mother.

"Here we are at this celebrated part of North Devon: we arrived yesterday, about four o'clock; and I think you will pity us when I tell you that, from an hour after we left Ilfracombe, to the present moment, it has rained incessantly. We calculated upon getting in time enough to ramble before evening; and to spend the whole of this

day in exploring the beauties of the place; instead of all this, we have been obliged to content ourselves with sitting before a blazing fire—turning over an odd volume of the Gentleman's Magazine, Warner's Walk in the Western Counties, and The Miseries of Human Life. Nor is this all; for I awoke yesterday at Ilfracombe with every symptom of a bad cold; which is now at its height; so that I have had no hope of going out, even if the weather had cleared up:—this is pleasure! Ann and Isaac have twice ventured out in the course of the day; and have taken a hasty view of the valley of Rocks, and of the village of Linmouth; and I have had the satisfaction of hearing a description of what I am within half a mile of, and came on purpose to see. However, not to make the worst of our story, I must add that when we arrived within about two miles of Linton, a scene of grandeur and beauty opened upon us which alone would repay us for coming. We had travelled several miles over a high, wild, and dreary tract of country;—giving the idea of travelling over the world as a planet,

and rendered still more desolate in appearance by torrents of rain. We were obliged to continue in the chaise in ascending hills where travellers almost always alight to relieve the horses; and were even constrained to do the same in passing a frightful precipice, where there is neither fence nor hedge; and where a chaise, very lately, fell over. At this point, a fine mountain scene opened upon us; and a sudden turn of the road discovered the enchanting vale and village of Linmouth, close to the sea, and at the base of rocks of tremendous height, and most exquisitely diversified in their colouring. After a long and steep ascent, we reached the inn where, fortunately, the room we occupy overlooks a considerable part of this fine prospect. This inn stands near the edge of the precipice that overhangs the sea, and seems to be in the clouds. To-morrow morning we are to meet a chaise from Minehead, at the top of the opposite hill—the ascent being so steep that chaises rarely come across the valley."

The letter is continued from Axminster:—

"On Thursday morning, finding my cold surprisingly better, and the weather being finer, I resolved, at least, to see the valley of rocks: so at half past five, we set off full speed; and I was gratified with a hasty sight of it. The scene gives the idea of gigantic architectural ruins; and the impression left upon my mind by the novelty and silent solemnity of this magnificent scene, will not soon be effaced. We returned to breakfast at the inn, and directly afterwards set off to climb the opposite hill; attended by a horse with panniers, carrying our luggage. This walk afforded us an opportunity of seeing something of the beauties of the vale of Linmouth, which I will not attempt to describe: at the summit of the hill we found our chaise; and at the end of the day reached Taunton; where we staid a day with Mr. ——, and the next, set out for Axminster; and found the kindest welcome from our dear friends."

With these kind friends, and with others in the south of Devon, and Dorsetshire, some weeks were very agreeably passed by my sisters, before

their return to their father's house; where they passed the summer.

During her stay at Ongar, Jane took an active part, I believe for the first time, in a Sunday school, then lately established at some distance from the town; but of her labours in the Sunday school I shall again have occasion to speak.

On the approach of the autumn it once more seemed desirable to return to Devonshire; and Jane's sisterly affection was now tried, not only by the call to banish herself from a kind and comfortable home, but by the necessity of leaving behind the companion of her former excursion; for her sister was now preparing for a final separation from the paternal roof. Jane expresses her poignant feelings in this separation from the constant companion of her life, in a letter of this date, which appears in the subjoined selection from her correspondence.*

In the beginning of October we were once more comfortably settled at Ilfracombe; and

* Vol. II. p. 229.

though the social attractions of the place, were now less than they had been in our first visit, it still contained kind friends, and the advantage of more leisure and seclusion was now wished for, enjoyed, and improved by my sister, who presently resumed her literary pursuits with eagerness.

At the close of this year, Jane addressed a letter to her sister, on the occasion of her marriage to the Rev. Joseph Gilbert—then one of the tutors of the Independent College at Rotherham. From this letter the following passages are extracted:—

Ilfracombe, December 18, 1813.

MY DEAR ANN,

"I cannot suffer this interesting morning to pass without something of a salutation from Ilfracombe; and I dare say this letter will arrive in good company; but I am sure no one will address you who can feel on this occasion either so glad, or so sorry as I do. So far as you only are concerned, I think I am entirely glad, and

feel as perfectly satisfied and happy as one can do about untried circumstances. But I cannot forget that this morning which forms one indissoluble partnership, dissolves another, which we had almost considered so. From the early days of "Moll and Bet," down to these last times, we have been more inseparable companions than sisters usually are; and our pursuits and interests have been the same. My thoughts of late have often wandered back to those distant years, and passed over the varied scenes which chequered our childhood and youth: — there is scarcely a recollection, in all that long period, in which we are not mutually concerned, and equally interested. If this separation had taken place ten years ago, we might, by this time, have been, in some degree, estranged from each other; but having passed so large and important a portion of life in such intimate union, I think we may confidently say it never will be so. For brothers and sisters to separate, is the common lot;—for their affection and interest to remain unabated is not common; but I am sure it is

possible; and I think the experience we have already had proves that we may expect its continuance. Farewell my dear Ann! and in this emphatical farewell, I would comprehend all the wishes, the prayers, the love, the joy, and the sorrow, which it would be so difficult to express in more words. If there is a dash of bitterness in the grief with which I bid you farewell, it is only from the recollection that I have not been to you the sister I might have been. My feelings have been so strongly excited to day, that I cannot bear more of it; and must leave you to imagine what more I would say on this occasion.

"I cannot—no, I cannot realize the busy scene at the Castle House, nor fancy you in your bridal appearance. I intend to place myself before the view of the house, about the time I imagine you are walking down the gravel walk; and stand there while you are at church, and till I think you are coming back again:—how strange—how sad, that I cannot be with you! What a world is this, that its brighest pleasures are, almost

invariably, attended with the keenest heart-rendings."

My mother's feelings in parting with her daughter, though she had every reason to rejoice on the occasion, were very strongly excited:—with the hope of administering comfort, Jane addressed to her a letter of which the following is a part.

"I hope that, even so soon as this, time has performed his kind office and taken off the edge of your sorrow. If I did not know that he can perform wonders, even in a few days, I could not venture to say so. I was grieved indeed, but not much surprised to hear that you felt the parting so acutely; and when reading your description of it, almost congratulated myself that I was so far off. Now, however, I would gladly come, and be your comforter if I could. My dear father and mother, we have felt much for you: believe that you have the love and the prayers of your absent children. I seldom close my eyes without thinking of you, and hoping you are comfortable. I feel the separation more this time than I did

before; though in all other respects I enjoy as much comfort as I can expect to do in this world. I am rejoiced to know that you have had the solace of dear S.'s tenderness; and in this respect, you have indeed been gainers by my absence; she has, I know, done all that human sympathy can do, to console and soothe you.

"I walked here (to Barnstaple) last Wednesday with Miss M. without any fatigue; though it is ten miles of incessant up and down hill. The deepest snow remembered in Devonshire, set in the day after I came; and has so blocked up the roads, that I am detained a close prisoner. I intended to have returned on Monday; but they are so unused to snow here, that no one will venture to go; though I should not be afraid. I cannot tell therefore how long I may be detained. Though I am very comfortable at Mr. ——'s, I am now impatient to return home, as I left my brother only for a day or two."

The snow continued to render the road between Barnstaple and Ilfracombe nearly impassible for more than a month:—Jane's solici-

tude on her brother's account, induced her to hazard the journey the first day on which it was pronounced to be practicable; and she returned to Ilfracombe on horseback, some time before any carriage could pass the road.

Without obtruding what relates to myself, more than I wish in this memoir, I could not fully display the self-denying, indefatigable, and tender assiduity with which Jane devoted herself to her brother's comfort:—to promote his restoration to health, was indeed, the business of her life, during several years. The reader of her memoir must not forget this principal feature of Jane Taylor's character—her generous devotedness to the welfare of those she loved: though the exemplification of it may appear in these pages less prominently than it might.

The seclusion and leisure of this second winter at Ilfracombe were employed by my sister in writing the greater part of the Tale, published some time afterwards. She commenced it with a specific idea of the qualities she designed to exhibit; but with no definite plan for its execution. In pur-

suit of the same general object, she followed, every day, the suggestion of the moment; and this was perhaps the only way in which she would ever have written. It was her custom, in a solitary ramble among the rocks, for half an hour after breakfast, to seek that pitch of excitement without which she never took up the pen: —this fever of thought was usually exhausted in two or three hours of writing; after which she enjoyed a social walk; and seldom attempted a second effort in the day; for she had now adopted the salutary plan of writing in the morning only:—to this plan she adhered ever after, with only occasional exceptions.

SECTION X.

Residence at Marazion—Publication of "Display," and "Essays in Rhyme"—Contributions to the Youth's Magazine.

THESE engagements were suspended during the following summer, by our leaving Ilfracombe. Having determined to spend the next winter in Cornwall, we held ourselves ready to take the first opportunity that should offer of going thither by sea. It was on a fine evening in June that we left Ilfracombe in a small fishing vessel, intending to pass round the Land's End, to Mount's Bay; but Jane suffered so much from sickness, that, in the evening of the next day, we landed at St. Ives; and after spending a few days there, proceeded to Marazion where we had already engaged lodgings.

If she had not found agreeable society at Marazion, and formed there some friendships which she highly valued, my sister would have continued to regret the rocks and solitudes of North Devon:—its gloomy and romantic scenery suited peculiarly her tastes, and the temper of her mind, which were little pleased by the business, and bustle, and open bareness of Cornwall. Yet nothing hardly can be more agreeable than the aspect of Mount's Bay; and Penzance is, perhaps, one of the most pleasantly situated towns in the kingdom. The country in its immediate neighbourhood is more wooded than other parts of the county; and the Bay, the villages on its margin, the Mount, with its castle, and the distant rocky hills, form a most complete and pleasing picture.

At Marazion, she staid long enough to form a strong local attachment:—our mode of life was suited to her tastes;—her occupations filled her thoughts, and were relieved by frequent intercourse with two or three individuals whom she

was happy to call her friends. Speaking of her feelings at this time, she says—

"The ease, tranquillity, and comfort of my present lot—so perfectly congenial to my temper and feelings, demand my constant thankfulness. It is no business of mine to inquire how long it will last. Long, I know, it will not last: and this I feel so sensibly, that my anxiety for myself, and my dear family, lessens as it respects our prosperity in this world; and increases for better things:—that it may be well with us all in the next."

And again, in a letter to her mother—

"Notwithstanding the toil of writing, it has its pleasures; and often, both this winter and last, when I have sat down at ten o'clock, all alone, in our snug parlour, with a cheerful fire, and with nothing to interrupt me for four hours, I have really felt very happy. As to my writing 'under disadvantageous circumstances;' it is so far from being the case, that I am sure I can never expect to be more favoured. All domestic

cares, except just giving orders, and settling my accounts, are completely taken off my hands by Mrs. Thomas:—the afternoon suffices for the needle work I have to do; and we are little interrupted by visitors; besides the rare privilege of having a room and fire quite to myself, during the morning. I therefore cannot plead my present circumstances in excuse, either for the poverty, or slowness of my writing:—for I do actually, what you describe as so desirable—'sit down composed and unembarrassed in my study.' Indeed, I cannot be sufficiently thankful for the large share of comfort I have enjoyed the last three years:—with nothing to try my temper; and exempt from most of those unpleasant realities which you mention as inseparable from the charge of a household. But I do not wish to fly from family cares; and one of the satisfactions of returning to you, for a time, would be, that I might share them with you."

From the friendships above alluded to, and from intercourse of a more general kind enjoyed at Marazion, Miss Taylor derived new and im-

portant advantages. For, hitherto, her connections had been almost exclusively within the pale of one religious community; but her Marazion friends were, most of them, members of the Established Church; and, moreover, very zealously attached to its constitution, and its forms.—She had also full opportunity of observing the state and spirit of another religious body—the Wesleyan Methodists: who, in the western part of Cornwall, are the predominant sect. She ever after looked back upon the expansion of her views and feelings, which took place at this time, with great satisfaction. Yet her attachment to the principles in which she had been educated did not become at all less firm; but on the contrary, it was made more decided by the comparison she had now the means of forming, between different practices and opinions.

There being, at Marazion, no society of congregational dissenters, Miss Taylor attended alternately the service of the Established Church, and that of the Wesleyan Methodists; and she gave her assistance, regularly, at the Sunday

school connected with the former:—making only this exception—that she should not be required to teach the church catechism. The concession was amicably yielded; and in this school she continued to labour with great pleasure, during the two years of her residence at Marazion. Her exertions on the Sunday were, however, so much beyond her strength, that they evidently impaired her general health. To those whose six days are occupied with general business, or manual labour, Sunday school teaching may, by the agreeable excitement it affords to the mind, and to the feelings, be, in the very best sense of the word, a real and beneficial *holiday*. But so great is the exhaustion consequent upon continued intellectual effort, that those who are called to undergo this peculiar species of toil may, perhaps, in most instances, lawfully use the day of rest for themselves. But Jane, far from yielding, on her own behalf, to a plea of this kind, adhered so resolutely to the principle of doing "what she could," that she continued her labours in the Sunday school during years of declining health;

deed, till the very last time of her attend-
ublic worship, a few weeks before her
h.

o 1 after our removal to Marazion, my sister
resun d writing the Tale she had commenced at
Ilfracombe; and late in the same year, it was
sent to press, 1 tle of "Display." The
favour with wh tle work was received;
and more especi high praise bestowed
upon it by a few i duals, whose judgment
and sincerity could no questioned; produced
a very desirable pon her mind. For it
gave her, in some de that confidence in her
own powers which she so much needed. Hitherto, she had persisted in attributing almost the whole success of the works in which she had had part to her sister; but this was all her own; and she was constrained to believe that she could write well, and that too in a higher line than she had before attempted; for Display was admired on account of excellences of a higher kind than such as belong merely to an entertaining or pathetic fiction. The advice which had been long,

and often urged upon her, of attempting to write for mature readers, was now greatly corroborated; for though she had addressed her Tale to young persons, it was quite evident that, with less diffidence, she would have been not less successful.

Yet, perhaps, had she attempted a fiction upon a more extended scale, she might have found herself out of her proper sphere. For the beauties of her style accord best with a brief, inartificial, and condensed narrative. Breadth of design, amplification, and digression, seemed not to be within her range:—her simple story is merely a thread, supporting a series of exquisite ornaments, and sparkling graces. That knowledge of the human heart which is evinced in Display, might merit to be called profound; but it is exhibited in touches so delicate, that they might escape the notice of the reader whose eye was less quick and piercing than that of the author. Yet, perhaps, it has been greatly these fine and half hidden beauties, that have procured for this Tale the praise (not often won by mere

fictions) of being read again and again, with new pleasure.

The volume did not, however, escape without some strong animadversions;—chiefly on the ground of the opinions professed in it. In reply to some observation on one point, the author says—

"As to the [illegible] certainly did not think I had erred on [illegible] side; and I think I have observed the [illegible]tion you mention, of not objecting to dan[illegible] in *itself*. The children at Stokely, you may [illegible]nber, were all dancing very merrily one evenin[illegible] But, in fact, except with mere children, there is no such thing as 'select christian dances.'—Go where you will, it is the world who dance; and the serious who do not. E—— is an instance of what is said about Emily:—her newly acquired religion is so far from having made her dull or precise, that there are many whom I have seen shake their heads at her youthful sprightliness. Yet since she has been a christian, she says she does not wish to dance: especially as it could not be with-

out associating with those who think only about this world. As to what Mr. Leddenhurst says about 'dancing through the world;' it is a remark I have heard made by those who are very far from being puritanical in their manners, or narrow in their views; and I merely understand by it, that a person of a contemplative and serious turn of mind, impressed with the grand realities of religion, and intent upon remedying, as far as possible, the sin and misery of the world, will not be much disposed to go 'dancing through it.'"

The suggestions of her friends were so far admitted as to induce Miss Taylor to look wider abroad, than hitherto, for the topics of her next undertaking. But to express her opinions on grave subjects, in naked prose, was more than she could dare. In verse, she felt as if sheltered. She therefore determined to write what she thought and felt, with less reserve than hitherto; but under the cover of poetry. Such were the views with which (soon after the publication of Display) she began writing her "Essays in

Rhyme." With an exception presently to be mentioned, the composition of this volume occupied her time during the remainder of her stay at Marazion.

Throughout the winter of the years 1814—15, my sister read much more than she had ever before done, in a like extent of time. The works she selected were of the kind best adapted to invigorate the understanding;—her taste in reading was for history; which always excited in her mind a much deeper interest than even the most fascinating fictions:—fictions she did indeed occasionally read; but it was only in those seasons when the exhaustion of long continued excitement in writing had rendered her incapable of close attention. The interests of reality were fast prevailing over those of the ideal world:—her mind, every day more and more, needed the stimulus of an object, such as she could deem important; and it became indisposed to exertion, at the impulse of mere fancy, or personal feeling.

This marked change in her mind and habits

of feeling, was evidently much promoted by the new scenes she witnessed, and the new friendships she formed in Cornwall. Before the time of her visit to Marazion, she had had too little opportunity of becoming acquainted with the sufferings and the wants of the poor. She knew by report the miseries and the vices of the real world; but her experience had scarcely presented to her any other evils than those sorrows of the heart, and of the imagination, which are either wholly created, or greatly aggravated by vacant and morbid sensibilities; and which, however interesting and amiable they may seem, are all more or less *exclusive*, if not selfish in their influence. Friendships — and literary friendships — and polished tastes, and the delights of fancy, and wit and criticism, are fine things; and where they exclude, either frivolity, or grossness, they are good things. But in a sound understanding and a rightly disposed heart, they will sink in estimation when we are called daily to administer relief to the common and real sufferings of human life. And perhaps the instances are very

rare (if indeed such instances are at all to be found) in which an abounding and laborious zeal in works of mercy, exists in union with a strong relish for the pleasures of the imagination. Be this as it may; it was observable with my sister, that, in proportion as her mind opened to the paramount claims which the sufferings of those around us have upon our sympathy, and our activities, she became less regardful of the gratifications of taste, and of the luxuries and sensibilities of the imagination; and more solicitous in all her engagements to pursue utility.

The two or three excellent persons at Marazion whom my sister ever after thought it her happiness to have known, were distinguished by their christian zeal in every good work; and she at once admitted and cherished, in her own character, the influence of those solid qualities.

The tendency of her acquaintance with Methodism was also of the same kind. And while, as will be apparent from her letters, she was very far from being blind to the defects of Methodism, or converted to its peculiar opinions,

she confessed herself to owe to it a new impression of some branches of christian feeling and duty.

Early in the year 1816, while still at Marazion, Miss Taylor commenced her contributions to the Youth's Magazine; which she continued, with few exceptions, to supply during the succeeding seven years. It was with the most extreme reluctance, and not without the urgent persuasion of those to whose advice she was accustomed to listen, that she yielded to the repeated request of the conductors of that publication, to write statedly for it. She dreaded the bondage which she felt such an engagement would bring her under; she dreaded, especially, lest the necessity of writing at stated times, whether or not she felt a spontaneous impulse and excitement, should induce the habit of prosing; or should impair that feeling of sincerity, simplicity, and genuine interest, with which, hitherto, she had always written; and without which, to write at all, she would have thought an abuse of her talent, and a presumption upon that degree of

favour she had won. Happily, these objections were overruled; and soon, finding herself successful, she felt a pleasure in the employment; and was incited to use her best exertions to improve for the highest purposes this opportunity of addressing constantly so large a number of young persons.

To a writer whose invention is fertile, whose judgment and taste are matured, and who, above all, has too much self respect to allow him to sink into inanity or frivolity, the necessity of writing at stated times, may be advantageous; for it is likely to produce, at once, freedom, and simplicity of style. Under such circumstances, that fastidiousness which would substitute lifeless proprieties, for faulty beauties, must be laid aside:—a subject having once presented itself to the thoughts, must not be dismissed, merely because it seems unpromising; and the mind, by the very feeling of being tied to an *unpromising subject*, is roused to make an extraordinary effort. Thus, I well know, it often was with my sister:—and the result has been, that

this collection of papers contains, perhaps, her happiest and her most useful compositions.

The Essays in Rhyme on Morals and Manners, were finished in the spring of the year 1816. Miss Taylor never wrote any thing with so much zest and excitement, as the pieces composing this volume. While employed upon them, she was almost lost to other interests:—even her prevailing domestic tastes seemed forgotten; and in our daily walks, she was often quite abstracted from the scene around her.

In truth she had stepped upon ground new to herself; and felt an impulse which gave unwonted vigour to her mind. Her impatience of pretension and perversity in matters of religion; and her piercing discernment of the deceptions of the heart, give a peculiar force and pungency to many passages in the Essays in Rhyme; while others are distinguished by the same interchanging pathos and playfulness, which had been displayed in her earlier writings. A few lines, perhaps, in this volume may have seemed *too* pungent to some readers. This she fully antici-

pated; but would not shrink from the hazard. Her feelings, and her judgment, were averse to compromise, or to the timid concealment of opinions. Some such concealment had been recommended to her by a friend, to whom the manuscript had been submitted, previous to publication: in reply to these suggestions she says—

"It is now time to refer to a former letter of yours, respecting certain passages in the Essays in Rhyme. It is scarcely necessary to say, after having written them, that I do not quite agree with you, as to the propriety of total silence, on all disputed subjects. Had that plan been always pursued, what would now have been the state of the world! I am very far from blaming Mr. Cunningham for writing the Velvet Cushion; (his doing it unfairly is another thing;) and with regard to introducing particular sentiments in works of a general nature, it appears to me one of the best ways of doing it. Who ever blamed Mrs. More for poking the steeple into almost every page of her writings? What happened to Miss Hamilton for making the hero of

her novel a dissenter? or, which is more to my purpose, what has been the consequence of the severe sarcasms of Cowper upon the church and its ministers? The consequence is, indeed, that he is hated by the high church party; but that does neither him nor his works any harm. What harm did he suffer from the review of his poems when they first appeared, by our old friend the Critical Review, when they said—'This is an attempt to be witty in very lame verse'? I grant it is probable that no proselytes have been gained to any party by what he wrote; but who will deny that the diffusion of the liberal sentiments that abound in his writings, has been of great service to the cause of truth and moderation? Do not suppose I am here placing myself by the side of Cowper:—I am only pleading against the system of observing a profound silence on all controverted subjects, in works of a general nature."

To some criticisms of a different kind she thus replies.—

"You will not be surprised, and I am sure you

will not be offended, to see in how few instances I have availed myself of your criticisms, if you reconsider the nature of them:—that is, how very few were merely literary. To that few I paid every attention;—most of them had already been marked for correction, either by myself, or other critical friends; but I was disappointed to find so few of that description; and still more, to find so many relating to matters of *opinion*, which you would hardly expect I should give up. I cannot guess why the very same opinions—or creed, if you please, (for I know that is a word you are particularly fond of) which were, I believe, expressed with quite as much plainness in Display, should offend you so much less there. You say, indeed, that you have only remarked upon that style of language which refers to a *party;* not to a *principle;* but on the contrary, I found not a single note upon those few passages in which I write as a dissenter. If you mean to call religious sentiment *party*, I shall not dispute the term with you. Christianity has had a great many ill names from its commencement, to this

day. But they have never done it the least harm, nor ever will. Do you think I would condemn you for using a prayer-book, or kneeling at an altar—for going under water; or even for wearing a broad brim? No. But as I would not make my creed narrower than that of the Bible, so I dare not make it wider. 'There is no other name under Heaven, whereby we must be saved:'—'He that believes shall be saved; he that believes not shall be damned.' This is all I would contend for, and all, I think, that I have contended for, as essential; and if it is to this you object, I fear not boldly to say that you are wrong. And my heart's desire and prayer is, that you may be led, as many a confident opposer has been, to what I must still maintain to be 'the only place—the feet of Jesus.'

"I think your prejudice—may I say your party spirit (for never does party spirit show itself so openly, or speak so narrowly as when it embraces the sceptical creed) has got the better of your good taste, in the present instance: your taste is good, when left to its free exercise; but

of your criticisms I scruple not to say
ve, under the influence of other feelings,
rayed a very bad one. Where, for instance,
u object to passages that are simple quota-
s from the Bible. Here I can speak quite
ntly, in a literary view, that the effect of
such quotations is good; and that they confer a dignity on the verse. Where, for instance, I have introduced, almost literally, those passages —'In thy presence is fulness of joy'—'In my father's house are many mansions'—I am sure that I am more classical than you, in your very ill chosen remark upon them. That these expressions have been quoted a thousand times by 'Lady Huntingdon;' or 'Mr. Huntington,' cannot render them at all less affecting or sublime; and to call such language 'religious cant,' is, in my opinion, irreligious cant."

SECTION XI.

Visits—Residence at Ongar—Religious Feelings.

THE consequences of the great and long sustained excitement occasioned by writing the Essays in Rhyme, upon my sister's health and spirits, were such as seemed to render change of scene, and complete relaxation necessary. She therefore determined to spend some part of the ensuing summer in Yorkshire. We left Marazion in the month of June, 1816; and after an agreeable journey of a week, reached Masbro, near Rotherham, where Mr. Gilbert then resided. This visit afforded the most delightful and beneficial relaxation to her mind, by yielding her both the lively enjoyments of a renewed intercourse with those most dear to her; and the pleasures of an

introduction to the very intelligent and agreeable society of that neighbourhood.

Six weeks were thus pleasantly passed in Yorkshire: in August we returned to Ongar, after an absence from home of nearly three years. In this interval my father had left the Castle House, and removed to a farm-house a short distance from the town: with this house, and its garden, my sister was delighted, and felt the highest pleasure—a pleasure altogether congenial with her character, in being once again in seclusion, with those she most loved: her feelings in this return home, are described in her letters of this date (p. 265—268, vol. ii.)

During this visit at home, Jane and her mother projected a work to be executed conjointly, in the form of a correspondence between a mother and her daughter, at school. These letters were commenced at Ongar, and completed at Hastings, where we passed the whole of the following winter. The composition of her part of these letters, together with her stated contributions to the Youth's Magazine, furnished her with

just so much literary employment at Hastings, as was consistent with her health; which had materially suffered by the too great exertion she had made the preceding winter. She now devoted a much larger proportion of her time to reading, than at any former period. The usual consequence of much reading she soon felt and regretted;—namely, a great indisposition to the exertion necessary for writing. And, indeed, after this time, she never again surrendered herself, fully, to the excitement necessary for productive efforts of the mind.

The months passed at Hastings, were passed in complete seclusion from society:—it was, however, to my sister an agreeable winter; for though she could relish the pleasures of general society, when they came in her way; they were what she never sought or wished for, when deprived of them: and, of the society of her dearest friends, she had long been accustomed to be deprived. With the pleasures of regular employment, books and fire-side comforts, she was ever satisfied and

delighted. Writing to her sister from Hastings, she says:—

"We have had a peaceful, comfortable winter: all I have wanted to make it as comfortable to me as formerly, was the same interesting employment. In the prospect of returning to Ongar, I feel keenly the pleasantness of the situation, and the affection of my family. The former is much more to me than you would imagine from what you saw of me in a much finer country. There is a composure of mind, and freedom from excitement, which is essential to my enjoyment of the country; and its being then the time of the Essays coming out, together with all the bustle and variety, totally destroyed that composure; but I can truly say—

'I would not for a world of gold,
That nature's lovely face should tire.'

And though the time of romance is over, I rejoice to feel in myself an increasing capability of in-

tellectual pleasure. Excuse me, dear Ann, for this pure egotism, and for reflections which, to you, surrounded by so many pressing realities, must seem trivial. But to none of my married friends, except you, can I write of my own interests, without feeling that I am intruding upon theirs. I feel, in writing to them, that they are married. But I except you, dear Ann, not only because you are a kind sister; but because you retain the enthusiasm of other days:—you are not hardened and blunted by the world."

In April of the following year, we left Hastings; and Miss Taylor spent some weeks with her friends, in and near London; after which she once more returned to Ongar. It was about this time that she first perceived an induration in the breast, which continued, during the following years of her life, to hold her in a state of constant apprehension, and at length proved fatal.

My sister's religious comfort had been, for some time, gradually increasing; while the pensiveness and diffidence of her temper seemed to give way to the influence of matured judgment,

and confirmed principle. Her religious belief had long been settled; but she had failed to apprehend, with comfort to herself, her own part in "the hope set before us in the gospel." It was at length, rather suddenly, in the summer of the year 1817, that the long standing doubts of her perso igion were dispelled; and she admitted he hope of salvation. The consequence of t hange in her feelings was her making t pu lic profession of faith in Christ which is red of His disciples. The extreme reserve er temper, as well as her want of religious rt, had hitherto withheld her from this explicit profession; now however, these reluctances gave way; and, in October 1817, she became a member of the christian church at Ongar, under the pastoral care of her father.

Her own account of this transaction occurs in a letter addressed to her sister, written a few months afterwards.—

"My mother told you of my having joined the church. You may have supposed that I was

frightened into it, by my complaint; but I feel thankful that this was not the case; for it was not till after I had consulted Mr. Clyne, that I felt any alarm about it; nor had I before, any idea of its being of a formidable kind. My mind, all the summer, had been much in the state it has been in for years past, that is, unable to apply the offer of the gospel to myself; and all confusion and perplexity, when I attempted to do so. One evening, (about three weeks before going to London for advice,) while alone in my room, and thinking on the subject, I saw, by an instantaneous light, that God would, for Christ's sake, forgive my sins:—the effect was so powerful that I was almost dissolved by it. I was unspeakably happy; I believed that had I died that moment I should have been safe. Though the strength of the emotion soon abated, the effect in a great degree remained. A fortnight afterwards, I told Isaac what had taken place, and he urged me to be proposed immediately to the church. It was in this state I went to London; and when I heard what was to me wholly unex-

pected, I could not but consider the change in my feelings as a most kind and timely preparation for what, but a few weeks before, would have overwhelmed me with consternation and distress. As it was, I heard it with great composure; and my spirits did not at all sink till after I returned home. Since then I have had many desponding hours, from the fear of death. The happiness I enjoyed for a short time has given place to a hope, which, though faint, secures me from distress."

Soon afterwards Miss Taylor accepted an invitation from a beloved friend at Reading, to pass the winter there: she also spent some weeks with her kind relatives at Oxford. She left Reading early in the following spring, and after spending a month near London, once more returned to Ongar. During this winter, the symptoms of the disorder above mentioned became more specific and alarming:—she had before received the advice of eminent surgeons in London; and at Reading, she was daily under the care of a very highly esteemed medical friend,

whose anxiety for her recovery could not have been greater had she been his daughter. This gentleman (father of the friend with whom she was a visitor) interdicted to her, absolutely, all literary labours; indeed she had now began to feel the excitement of composition to be directly injurious to her health; and after this time she wrote only occasionally, and at distant intervals.

The summer of the year 1818, was a season of severe and continued sickness in our family. In turns Jane herself, one of her brothers, and her father, were confined for several weeks, by dangerous illness. In her anxiety for those dear to her, she so much forgot herself, that her most alarming complaint seemed quiescent; and in the autumn, when family comfort was pretty well restored, she appeared to look more cheerfully upon life than, lately, she had been wont to do; and consented that arrangements should be made for increasing her comfort at home. With this view she once more fitted up a study, to

which she became as strongly attached as to any one she had occupied.

Believing herself to be now likely to remain at Ongar, she actively engaged in works of christian charity. During a former abode at her father's house, she had originated a ladies working society, for the benefit of the poor: and to the meetings of this society she gave her attendance whenever she was at home. She became also a constant, and most laborious teacher in the Sunday school; and continued to be so, long after it was apparent that the exertion exceeded her strength. It was in the sedulous and affectionate instruction of the children of her own class that, alone, she delighted: and so far was she from assuming any right of direction over her fellow teachers, that she retreated, as much as possible, from the precedence which would have been yielded to her: — doing less, perhaps, in matters of general direction, than she might have done with propriety.

My sister was, in nothing, an enthusiast: she

was not therefore supported through the fatigues and discouragements that attend these laborious duties, by those ardent feelings, or sanguine hopes, which often aid the benevolent activity of young persons. The reverse was too much the case; and whenever good appeared to result from her labours, it seemed to take her by surprise. Nor were her early habits, or her tastes, in unison with exertions of this sort. But whatever she did of this kind, was done simply from a full and strong conviction of the obligation of christians, not "to please themselves;" but to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord."

The influence of principle over her mind became still more conspicuous when she was called to take her part in promoting the objects of the Bible Society, in her neighbourhood. For those business-like forms, and that publicity which seem inseparable from the conduct of this, and similar institutions, were peculiarly in opposition, if not to her judgment—at least to her habits and her feelings; yet when she was convinced that it was not practicable fully to attain the im-

portant ends of the society by silent and unconnected exertions, she submitted to the apparent necessity of the case; and took her part in associations and committees. But the *committee room* was not her sphere:—nor was it from a love of *office* that ever she presided there.

Besides the attention bestowed on the children of her class on the Sunday, Miss Taylor instructed them in writing and arithmetic, one afternoon in the week. Labours of this kind were agreeable to her, because she found in them (what is needed by minds devoid of enthusiasm) a direct and perceptible benefit resulting from her exertions.

Three or four years were thus passed at home by my sister, in the quiet discharge of domestic and religious duties; interrupted only by occasional visits to her friends. During this time, the slow progress of her complaint kept her mind in a state of anxiety, and deterred her from attempting to execute some literary projects which had often employed her thoughts:—besides keeping up her correspondence with her friends, and

writing the papers before mentioned, she composed, I believe, nothing but the fragment which stands first among the Poetical Remains; and some pieces expressive of personal feeling; of which two or three are also now printed.

Besides the delicate and declining state of her own health, my sister's thoughts were much occupied by the continued illness of her father:—during these times of domestic affliction it was impossible to her to abstract her attention from present interests. In the autumn of the year 1820, she attended him to Margate; and had the pleasure of seeing her beloved parent surmount a disorder which had long threatened his life.

Early in the following year, Miss Taylor again left home, to visit her sister, Mrs. Gilbert: she continued at Hull more than four months; in which time she made excursions to York and Scarborough. In this visit she seemed to enjoy the pleasures of general society more than at any former time. Yet it was but for an hour that ever the flattering attentions she often received abroad drew away her thoughts from

the domestic circle, within which her heart re-

This excursion appeared so much to have improved her general health, that there seemed reason to believe that, so long as her mind could be agreeably occupied, without too much excitement, her complaint might remain in a quiescent state. In this hope, her many kind friends in Yorkshire, Devon, and in the neighbourhood of London, warmly urged her to pass her time in successive visits among them:—she felt deeply the kindness of these invitations; and believed also that this frequent change of scene, and these social pleasures, would be more likely than any other means to promote her recovery.—But she determined rather to remain at home. This determination, I have reason to know, was influenced chiefly by a regard to her religious interests; for she had felt, with regret and fear, the effects of continued external excitements, in diverting her attention from objects of supreme importance. She trembled at the danger of losing sight of her highest hopes: she

wished, now, to call home her thoughts, and to converse with her own heart, without interruption. Such were the motives which she repeatedly avowed to those with whom she was accustomed to converse confidentially, when urged to avail herself of the kind invitations of her friends: —"I find," she often said, "that *home* is the place that suits me best."

It was, therefore, with a free and deliberate preference of the interests of the soul to those of this life, that she returned to seclusion, and to the offices of christian charity, when she had every facility, and strong motives for pursuing a different course.

But that tranquillity and abstraction from earthly interests which she so much desired and enjoyed, was not to be of long continuance; for soon after her return to Ongar, she found herself unexpectedly placed in circumstances in which her feelings became deeply interested; and the results of which continued, through the short remainder of her life, to keep her mind in a state of painful agitation; and to call into the fullest

exercise her christian principles. Her health also suffered, as must be supposed, from the same causes; and from this time, she herself distinctly anticipated the fatal termination of the disease that had so long threatened her life.

The house at Marden Ash, near Ongar, in which my father had lived eight years, being at this time let with the farm to which it belonged, he removed from it to a house which he purchased in the town. This new abode, though altogether more commodious than the last, was so much less suited to my sister's tastes, that the removal caused her strong regrets; and evidently increased the depression of her spirits; and thus hastened the progress of her disorder. In the autumn of the year 1821, attended by one of her brothers, and a nephew, she visited Margate; where she placed herself under a new medical direction, and with the view of giving full effect to this course of remedies, she passed the following winter months near London, where she could have the advantage of constant advice. The months passed in this way gave her the

pleasure and advantage of daily intercourse with a new friend, to whose kindness and christian counsels she thought herself deeply indebted. At this time her opinion of her own case had become decidedly unfavourable; though still, when alarming symptoms abated, she admitted the hope of recovery. The state of her mind under these circumstances was neither so tranquil as she wished, nor so much agitated as those who knew the timidity of her disposition had feared it would have been.

Her feelings at this time are described in a letter to Mrs. Gilbert; from which the following passages are extracted:—after informing her sister of the unfavourable opinion of her case, which had been given by two surgeons, whom she had lately consulted, she says:—

"You may judge then, dear Ann, what my expectations are when I calmly and steadily view my present circumstances. Of late, too, I have felt my general health more affected than hitherto. But it requires *much*, utterly to extinguish the hope of recovery:—with God nothing is im-

possible. Besides, it is really difficult, while occupied with the usual pursuits of life, and while able to go in and out, much as usual—it is difficult to realize the probability of death at hand. But it comes strangely across me at times, when, forgetting it, I have been planning as usual for the future. Then a dark cloud overshadows me, and hides all earthly concerns from my sight; and I hear the murmurs of the deep waters: I expect I shall have deep waters to pass through:—already I feel 'the sting of death;' but am not without hope that it may be taken away."

Though the hope of recovery continued to agitate her mind, still her principal anxiety related to her hope of the better life. The doubts that, at times, distressed her, took their rise, for the most part, from the high notions she had formed of the requirements of Christianity. Of the way of salvation, as a free and full provision of mercy, she seemed to have a clear apprehension; but she had long believed that, from the want of a sufficiently explicit, particular, and authoritative exposition of the *law* of Christ, as given to

us in His discourses, and in the preceptive parts of the epistles, the *Gospel* is extensively and fatally abused in the professedly christian world; and she trembled lest the flatteries of self-love should delude her into a similar presumption.

It will be seen, from her letters, with how much pleasure she listened to those preachers with whom the great doctrine of salvation through the sacrifice of Christ is the principal subject; and who, following the example of the apostles, make the freest offer of this salvation to their hearers. But still, she listened, with jealousy, to the glad tidings thus proclaimed, unless constantly accompanied with a fearless, distinct, and uncompromising exposition of the parallel truth, that "every one shall receive according to his works." Her frequent expressions were such as these—"I have no doubt as to the way of salvation:—it lies upon the surface of the Scriptures; and appeals with the force of truth to every heart that is humbled by the conviction of personal guilt: but those who shall receive the benefit of this free salvation, and who

shall be 'accounted worthy to stand before the throne,' are those who, on earth, are meet for heaven, by being truly like Christ:—and am I—are the mass of those of whom we are accustomed to think well—are they like Christ?"

Entertaining such views, my sister was often distressed with the apprehension that there are indeed "few who shall be saved;" and not being able to class herself among the few whose eminent holiness of temper, and of life, and whose abounding labours in the Lord, distinguish them, beyond doubt, as the disciples of Christ, she was long unable to admit the comfort of assured hope.

Whatever may be thought of this state of mind, and of the justness of those views which were the occasions of it, I have thought it right to mention them; and, if it may suggest profitable reflection, to leave the subject with the reader.

SECTION XII.

Last Illness, and Death.

On the occasion of the death of her uncle, the Rev. James Hinton, of Oxford, which occurred in the month of July, Miss Taylor was impressed with the belief that death was not to visit the family with "a single blow;" and this foreboding was not falsified, for, in the following November, another uncle — Mr. Charles Taylor, was removed; and in a few months more, her own death took place.

With the hope of, at least, recruiting her spirits, my sister, accompanied by her brother, and the young friend to whom this memoir is addressed, visited Margate, once again; where

she passed the month of October, tranquilly and pleasantly: on her return, she went to Bedford; and availed herself of the opportunity to visit Olney and Weston: the feelings of the moment she has expressed in the lines written on visiting Cowper's garden.* Her return from Bedford took place at the time of an extraordinary inundation; and she, with the young friend who accompanied her, was exposed to considerable peril in the journey.

At this time, she was so far exempt from suffering, or any positive inconvenience from the disease that was preying upon her constitution, and her ordinary comfort was so little impaired, that she took her part in the common engagements of life, with scarcely any apparent diminution of her wonted activity and animation. In these respects she was indeed remarkably favoured by the goodness of God: for, to the last, her sufferings were only those consequent upon extreme debility.—The local disease insensibly pre-

* Contributions of Q. Q. Vol. II. p. 254.

vailed over the strength of her constitution, with little external show of its progress, and with scarcely any positive pain. This exemption from suffering was noted by herself, and her family, as calling for lively and devout gratitude to the Father of mercies.

The event might probably have been somewhat different, had not new symptoms been induced by accidental exposure to cold. On the 21st of November my sister went to London, to take leave of one of her most intimate friends, who was then preparing to leave England. This interview, it was known by both parties, must terminate a friendship of long standing, and of unusual tenderness and confidence: the meeting was therefore protracted as long as possible, so as to allow my sister to return to Ongar the same day. Being unable to procure a coach, she and her friend took boat at Lambeth, late in the afternoon; and proceeded as far as London Bridge, through a chilly rain. This exposure produced general rheumatic pains, which from that time, continued

to be the principal cause of her suffering, and, apparently, of the rapid decay of her strength.

Notwithstanding her extreme weakness, she still continued to attend public worship; and even to teach her class in the Sunday school. The last time of her doing so, was on the 4th of January.—She went to the meeting house, accompanied by the friend before mentioned, whom, after teaching the children the usual time, she took to a window, overlooking the burial ground; and pointing to a spot, opposite, said—"There Betsey, —that is where my grave is to be." The same afternoon a funeral sermon was preached for a highly esteemed friend—the mother of a large family, whose death had very deeply affected her. She looked at the weeping family; and deliberately realized the scene, as she believed, soon to be repeated in the same place, when her own family should be the mourners.

Either by the too great excitement of her feelings on this occasion; or by her exposure to the weather, her symptoms seemed to be aggravated

from this time:—her breathing became so quick and feeble, as to keep her spirits in constant agitation; and almost to prevent her joining in conversation. She still took her place in the family circle; though it had now become necessary that she should be carried from the parlour to her chamber.

Partly from the impulse of that restlessness which often attends a last illness, and with the hope of deriving at least some alleviation from medical advice, she determined, in the month of February, upon spending a week with her young friends at Newington, whose affectionate attentions to her, during their late visit at Ongar, gave her the assurance that she should find all the comforts of home in their house. Though extremely distressed by the exertion of being placed in the chaise, the journey seemed greatly to revive her:—she in some measure enjoyed the society of her friends; and returned home in amended health. She describes her feelings about this time, in the following letter to her sister:—

Ongar, March 24, 1824.

* * * "I hope the pleasant excursion to Nottingham will do you both good. Give my kind love to C—— and S——, of whom I often think; but I now refrain from writing to any one, unless it is absolutely necessary. I feel much obliged by Mr. ——'s kind remembrance of me:—tell him so when you have opportunity: as to writing three verses, or one, for his Album, it has been, and is, quite impossible.

"You heard from mother that I went to town for advice. I was most kindly nursed there for a week; and returned much better; nor have I since had a violent return of that tremendous heaving of my breath, which I can compare only to an inward tempest. This laborious breathing, however, though relieved, has never subsided entirely, since I first felt it, which was from the commencement of the rheumatic attack. The weather, for some weeks past, has been very unfavourable to me. I think there is still a hope

that my strength and appetite may be restored, at least to what they were, when I am able to take the air; and perhaps to change it. But I more often think that a gradual decline has commenced; and if you were to see how much I am reduced, you would not wonder at my forming such an opinion. My bones indeed 'look and stare upon me:'—my strength too fails me, so that I cannot walk more than once or twice across the room at a time; and whenever I do, I feel as if all within me was hanging in heavy rags. Whenever the weather permits, I am drawn round the garden, which is a great refreshment.

"I need not tell you how kindly I am nursed; and how tenderly all is done that can be done for my relief and comfort. I have also to be thankful for being so free from pain;—my suffering now is almost entirely from debility, and weariness, and difficulty of breathing; but what I am most of all thankful for, is, that the prospect of death is less formidable to me, owing to my having more 'peace in believing;' and an

increase of this is all I want, in order to reconcile me to it entirely. I often think too, that if I am taken off by a gradual decay, I ought to rejoice, as being thereby rescued, probably, from far greater suffering: but I desire to leave it all with God.

"I hope you do not forget that this summer is your time for coming to Ongar. For a long time I have been looking forward to it as affording a hope of our meeting once more; which I am sure we should both wish. We do not like the thought of Mr. Gilbert's coming so far south without our seeing him: could you not both come on from Nottingham? Though, unless I should become rapidly worse, it would be better for you to come when the season is more advanced. Dear Ann, and Mr. Gilbert, remember me in your prayers, as I am sure you do. Your affectionate sister, Jane."

Neither Jane herself, nor her family, fully apprehended the now near approach of dissolution;—some degree of delusion is very frequent in such cases—and in this, the flatteries of hope

were strengthened by that calmness and fortitude, and reluctance to receive any assistance she could possibly dispense with, which, in great measure, concealed the progress of her decline; and also by the undiminished vigour of her mind, and the unabated interest she took in every thing with which she was wont to be concerned.

Though she had, at this time, become incapable of long continued religious exercises, yet, to the last day of her life, her stated times of retirement were observed by her. Usually in the evening, by her request, her brother read to her some portion of scripture, and a few pages of Bennett's Christian Oratory—a book she highly valued. On these occasions her conversation, though not elevated by the language of unclouded hope, frequently contained the expression of a humble and growing trust in the power and grace of the Saviour.

Happily for herself, my sister's imagination which, throughout her life, had been too much alive to ideas of terror, seemed in great degree quelled by the languors of disease. Thus her mind

was relieved from those unreal fears which, otherwise, might have possessed her thoughts, in the near prospect of death. Still, occasionally, she seemed to be contending with what she acknowledged to be horrors of the imagination only.—"Oh!" she would say, "the grave!—the grave is dark and cold!—But surely, even to the wicked, there is no suffering in the *grave*." For some time she seemed much distressed with the apprehension of her remains being disturbed after burial: but from this fear she was relieved by an explicit promise, that such precautions should be taken as should render such disturbance impossible. For the most part, however, the higher, and the real interests of the future life occupied their proper place in her thoughts; and whatever other anxieties might harass her for a moment, she quickly returned to this sentiment—

> "If sin be pardoned, I'm secure;
> Death has no sting besides."

She had, for months past, been wishing to

transcribe her will, with the view of amending it in some particulars; but had deferred doing so, in the hope of a return of strength, which might make her more equal to the task: but feeling now her powers of body rapidly declining, she roused herself by an extraordinary effort, and in a way quite characteristic of herself: for it was always some endeavour to promote the comfort or interests of those she loved, that called forth the vigour of her mind. She was therefore supported (April 5th) at her desk, and continued writing with evidently a very painful effort, more than an hour: she completed her task in the three or four following days. I may just take the occasion to say that, in the disposal of her affairs, she was guided by the most exact impartiality—acting consistently with the principle she had often warmly professed, and which is so rarely regarded—that there can be no more right to do wrong, (by indulging capricious preferences,) in making a will, than in any other transaction of life.

Though the least exertion had now become

distressingly painful, her mind was so perfectly collected, that the transcript of her will was made without errors, and the parts in which it differed from the original, were expressed with her wonted perspicuity:—she also, the same afternoon in which she completed her task, entered some payments in her accounts, as well as the daily memorandums in her pocket book, which are complete to the Thursday before her death.

On Saturday she was visited by the medical gentleman whom she had consulted when last in London. She was then, though actually dying, so little aware of the near approach of death, that she asked his opinion of the practicability of her leaving home, for change of air. After he left her, however, recollecting his expressions, and manner of replying to her inquires, she inferred the truth: and on Sunday plainly indicated to her family that she did so.

Her last Sabbath was passed tranquilly:—several times in the course of it, she exerted her utmost strength to converse with her mother; into whose mind she endeavoured to pour that

consolation which she knew would be so much needed. In the evening she conversed separately with her father, and brother; and to them, as before to her mother, she professed her settled hope of heaven: to the latter she said—"I am now quite happy—as happy as my poor frame will bear."

On Monday she came down to the parlour at the usual hour, and was calm in spirit; seeming distressed only by her increased debility. During the morning she conversed for some time with her brother, who received her dying wishes, and injunctions; and an emphatic expression of affection, which will ever sound fresh in his recollection, as if heard but yesterday.—In the afternoon she resolved to make a last effort to finish a letter (that which closes the Extracts from her Correspondence) to her young friends at Newington. For this purpose her brother supported her in his arms;—for she was now utterly unable to sustain herself: her affectionate earnestness to express to them her deep concern for their highest

interests, cost her an effort that seemed as if it must have hastened her dissolution.

In the evening a minister called, with whom she conversed a short time in a tone of cheerful and confirmed faith. Afterwards with her mother, in terms of intermingled affection, consolation and hope.

When carried up stairs on Monday night, she, for the first time, allowed her sister to do every thing for her. She passed the night quietly; but in the morning felt herself unable to rise as usual:—about ten o'clock her brother read a Psalm, and prayed with her. Soon afterwards she was placed in an easy chair by the bed side. About the same time one of her brothers arrived from London:—to him she spoke with the most emphatic earnestness, professing, very distinctly, the ground of her own hope, and the deep sense she then had of the reality and importance of eternal things. Her voice was now deep and hollow—her eye glazed, and the dews of death

were on her features; but her recollection was perfect, and her soul full of feeling. While thus sitting up, and surrounded by her family, in a loud, but interrupted voice, she said—"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Soon afterwards she repeated, with the same emphasis, the verse of Dr. Watts—

"Jesus to thy dear faithful hand
My naked soul I trust;
And my flesh waits for thy command
To drop into the dust."

repeating with intense fervour the words—

"Jesus to thee —— my naked soul——
My naked soul I trust."

Being then placed in bed, all withdrew but her sister; with whom she conversed some time, giving her several particular directions, with great clearness. She then requested that every

thing in the room might be put in the most exact order: after this she lay tranquilly an hour or two; seeming to suffer only from the laborious heaving of the chest: and in reply to a question to that effect, said she was "quite comfortable."

In the afternoon she observed her brother to be writing a letter: she inquired to whom: being told it was to Mrs. Gilbert (who, with Mr. Gilbert, was then on her way to Ongar) she gave her opinion as to the best way of ensuring her sister's meeting the letter, so as, if possible, to hasten her arrival. She had just before said — "Well, I don't think now I shall see Ann again:—I feel I am dying fast."

From this time she did not again speak so as to be understood; but seemed sensible, till about five o'clock, when a change took place:—her breathing became interrupted: — still she was tranquil, and her features perfectly placid; at half past five, she underwent a momentary struggle, and ceased to breathe.

THE interment took place in the burial ground of the meeting house at Ongar; where a simple monument has been erected to mark the spot.

The profile prefixed to this volume was taken some years ago:—it has been deemed correct, and characteristic of the original. Yet I have to regret my inability to give, in place of it, a *portrait;* but no likeness of my sister exists which would be thought satisfactory by those who knew her. In truth the expression of her face was of that kind which is the most difficult to be seized by the pencil; for it was the expression of the finest feelings, habitually veiled from observation. Her features were delicately formed, and regular:—her stature below the middle size:—every movement bespoke the ac-

tivity of her mind; and a peculiar archness and sprightliness of manner gave significance and grace to all she did.

An exact and a lively image of the writer's character will be found in the Extracts from her Correspondence; for her letters were ever the genuine expression of her feelings. Not one of the many of which I have had the perusal, betrays any attempt to write "a clever letter:"—she corresponded with none but *friends*, and her intercourse with those she loved was inspired only by warm and generous affection. This may indeed be named as the prominent feature of her character; for to love, and to be loved, was the happiness she chiefly sought.

Once and again, in these letters, will be found acknowledgments of the constitutional irritability of her temper:—this irritability was, however, more often excited by excessive concern for the interests of those whom she loved, than by any other cause:—I may say *never* by the thwarting of mere selfishness. Her abhorrence of every kind of pretension—of fraud, and of injustice,

was, indeed, strong; and this feeling, added to her piercing discernment of the secret motives of those with whom she had to do, often occasioned to her much fruitless uneasiness; and might sometimes give to her manner an air of constraint; for, to seem to accept as genuine, either actions or words, which she suspected to be spurious, required a degree of self-command of which she was hardly capable.

In her letters my sister frequently complains, also, of the languor and inertness of her mind; but these expressions might, without explanation, convey a false idea to the reader. It is indeed true that the delicacy of her constitution, especially after it was impaired by mental labours, and by sickness, rendered her liable to much languor; but her disposition, and her habits, were those of activity and diligence. In whatever she undertook, she was assiduous, persevering, and exact; and all her exertions were directed by the love of utility. She was fond of the labours of the needle, and of every domestic engagement. Indeed, so strong were her tastes

of this kind—so completely feminine was her character, and so free was she from that ambition which often accompanies intellectual superiority, that had she, early in life, been placed in a sphere of home duties, her talents would probably never have been elicited.

The leisure she enjoyed in the latter years of her life, and the influence of some of her friendships, as well as her own tastes, might have led my sister to pursue the elegancies of literature; but her domestic habits, and the strong sense she had of the relative importance of different objects, alike prevented her from often seeking amusement amid the luxuries of intellect. To the character of a *literary lady* she had, in fact, a decided dislike; both on account of the affectation from which it is seldom exempt, and of the false importance commonly attached by such persons to the most trivial pursuits.

The combination of humour and pensiveness, in the same character, seems to result from some ordinary law of human nature;—at least, several remarkable instances of the kind might be named.

This conjunction of opposite tastes belonged, in a peculiar degree, to my sister's mind, and gave a grace and an interest to the productions of her pen. Without this union and counteraction humour is apt to become broad and offensive, and pensiveness to sink into sentimentality or dullness. But where it exists, even when both do not actually appear, the one will operate, by a latent influence, to give point and vividness to the most sombre sentiment; while the other serves, at once, to enrich, and to chastise the sports of fancy. To these qualities of my sister's mind were added a fine sense of the beautiful and sublime in nature, and a nice perception of the characteristic points of every object she observed.

In spontaneous conversation, especially on some matters of opinion, she might seem much influenced by peculiar predilections; but whenever she felt herself responsible for the opinion she gave, and especially when she wrote for the press, her judgment was acute and sound, and happily directed by intuitive good sense. Of this

excellence, I think, her correspondence with her friends, and the papers contributed to the Youth's Magazine, will furnish frequent and striking instances.

The poetical remains exhibit a considerable versatility of talent. My sister first wrote simply to express the overflowing emotions of her heart:—these pieces breathe tenderness; and, relieved as they are by an elegant playfulness, give the truest image of the writer's mind. It was under the guidance of a peculiarly nice ear for the language of nature, that she accommodated these talents to the difficult task of writing verse for children: her compositions of this kind are, for the most part, distinguished by a perfect simplicity and transparency of diction—by brief, exact, and lively descriptions of scenery—by frequent and exquisite touches, both of humour and of pathos, and by a pervading purity and correctness of moral principle.

But her earlier compositions gave little promise of that energy of thought, elevation of sentiment, and force of diction, which appear in the

Essays in Rhyme, and in some of the pieces now first published. This long latent vigour of intellect was soon quelled by the languors of sickness: had it been sustained a few years, she would probably have attempted some projects with which her mind was teeming at the time when she found it necessary to abstain from literary occupations. Yet perhaps her delicate frame, even if it had not been shaken by disease and sorrow, could never have sustained the effort necessary to command the thoughts with which, often, her imagination laboured.

But whether or not there may be reason to suppose that, under more propitious circumstances, she might have moved, as a writer, in a higher sphere; it is enough to know that her talent has been most beneficially occupied. For, setting aside those of her works which display the most genius, she has, in an unpretending walk of literature, widely scattered the seeds of virtue and piety. Nor can it be doubted that the good fruits of her labours shall endure, and

increase, long after those who now cherish a fond remembrance of her virtues in private life, shall have passed away.

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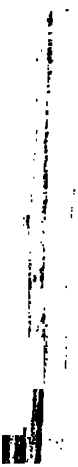

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